

Submitter: M.A. Kruse

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4105

Western Oregon holds more than 600,000 acres of state forestlands, from the Santiam to the Tillamook and Clatsop, the outskirts of Salem and Portland to the Pacific Coast.

Our forests support clean flowing rivers for salmon, critical habitat for a wide range of wildlife, recreation areas, and a robust outdoor economy.

Drive a massive \$550M outdoor economy and support 10,500+ jobs

Are home to six salmon stronghold rivers and 17 endangered or at-risk species

Provide clean drinking water for 500,000+ people

The State Forester already sets sustainable harvest levels consistent with the mandate to manage state forests for "Greatest Permanent Value" for all Oregonians and reports this to the public. The ODF has exceeded its harvest objectives over the past 10 years.

The bill would create a new right for timber companies, counties and tax districts to sue the ODF for alleged violations of the timber harvest rule, creating endless litigation and limiting the ODF's ability to manage state forests for multiple values.

Oregon's mature and old-growth forests (also called legacy forests) are widely recognized for their essential role in fighting climate change, protecting watershed integrity, and safeguarding fish and wildlife. Decades of logging have left a severe deficit of old-growth forests on Oregon's state lands.

Mature and old-growth legacy forests in Oregon's temperate rain forest region are well positioned to survive the disturbance-enhancing effects of climate change, including wildfires, and they offer incredible outdoor recreation opportunities.

Old-growth trees confer fire resilience to forests, thanks to their high moisture content, thick bark, and lack of ladder fuels that lead to crown fires. Together, adaptations like these make it difficult for fire to ignite tree boles (trunks) or climb into canopies in larger/older trees, particularly in western fire-adapted forest types.

Legacy trees help buffer forests from extreme heat and drought, with deep roots that enhance water storage and access and cooler microclimates under the shade of their leaves.

Legacy forests protect and provide clean drinking water for millions of Americans, yet remain a rarity on the landscape after centuries of aggressive timber logging.

Legacy forests maintain ecosystem functions and serve as a refuge from both climate change and fire impacts for valued fish and wildlife species.

Legacy are carbon storage powerhouses. Large, older trees store a disproportionately high amount of carbon and continue to sequester carbon

throughout their centuries long lifetimes.