

Submitter: DeVida Johnson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or HB4105
Topic:

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, and Members of the Committee,

I oppose House Bill 4105 and its amendments. This bill would prioritize clearcutting Oregon forests over other critical values such as clean drinking water, clean air, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. Our state forests are worth more standing — it is unacceptable to prioritize timber harvest over all the other values these forests offer.

I moved from Vermont, the Green Mountain State, to Oregon 18 years ago. It is Oregon's forests that drew me to this magical place, a place that I knew would feel like home given where I was then living. Forests give us the clean air we breathe. Have you ever walked along a trail, surrounded by trees, and just smelled how fresh the air is? Breathe deeply – it feels good. Imagine not having the fresh air that trees provide for your hikes, for your life, for your health, and for the planet. Never mind all the other flora and fauna that call the forests home. There has been so much new understanding of the connection between nature and our own well-being. I for one feel renewed, re-energized, and reconnected after a hike or walk in the woods. A feeling that is priceless. We need our forests so future generations can continue to connect to these critical and magical places. If we don't save them now, before we know it there will be nothing left.

This bill would result in more lawsuits and could cost the state millions of dollars. And this bill would also result in more clearcuts and less habitat for vulnerable fish and wildlife. It would lead to less mature and old-growth forests, and less carbon storage on the landscape at a time when climate change is becoming more severe. I've noticed in my 18 years here, that the number of days over 100 degrees has increased from just one week in August to all throughout the summer. This is alarming especially considering the speed at which this change has occurred. This bill does not represent the public lands vision I want my elected leaders to support.

I urge you to oppose this bill. Instead, I encourage this committee to focus on measures that would protect Oregon legacy forests, safeguard fish and wildlife, and protect communities drinking water for our children and future generations. In the words of Henry David Thoreau: "'In Wildness is the preservation of the World."

Please oppose this bill and ensure it does not pass out of committee.

Sincerely,

DeVida Johnson