

Submitter: Pamela Reber
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, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

I am a natural resource professional with state agency experience in the areas of natural hazards and watershed management. I have worked closely with industry to install miles of fish habitat on industrial timber lands.

I oppose House Bill 4105.

First of all, drought conditions are the new normal. The production of clean water should be protected and prioritized. State of Oregon-owned lands need to be reserved for production of public water resources. This can only be accomplished through the protection of the integrity of forest ecosystems, a value that is directly supportive of clean water production for Oregon's communities. Tree farms are not forests that support these values when they are hot, exposed, and contribute to more evaporation than retention, even if carbon sequestration is high when trees are young.

This bill prioritizes logging over all other forest values on state forests. It undermines the state forest Habitat Conservation Plan and would lead to more clearcuts, more industry lawsuits, less habitat for fish and wildlife, and less carbon storage on state public forests. If the State of Oregon is a parent in their role of funding, the timber industry is now a fully mature adult child who received their inheritance long ago, who is internationally invested, and who is now seeking to change the rules - not because they need help, but because they carry great power. As such, this committee should be talking about what RESPONSIBILITY the timber industry should hold for future water supply and quality, just because they carry so much power over Oregon's landscape and water production capability. Restrictions like much larger riparian buffers should be revisited to conserve water quality and supply - before these become bigger emergencies for water-limited communities.

The bill is unnecessary, expensive, and will drive litigation on issues that were recently resolved. The Department of Forestry already has processes in place to establish timber harvest goals and regularly meets or exceeds those goals, often at the expense of water quality, imperiled species, and carbon storage. Please don't let this bill pass out of committee.

Sincerely,
Pam Reber