

Submitter: Andrew Simrin

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4105

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

I am a lifelong Oregonian that often “ground truths” our forested public lands with “boots on the ground”, and provides valuable public input to decision makers and land managers. Our legacy mature and old growth forests on public lands are an important and iconic part of our state.

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.

Our public forests are valued by many not because of the timber, but because of the recreation, scenic, wildlife, and biodiversity benefits, among other non timber harvest operations.

Public lands are a treasure for exploring alone, or with family and friends. Forests provide us with clean air and water that additionally provide quality habitat and carbon sequestration potential.

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. Wildfire smoke is a persistent problem that is expansive in length for number of days impacting communities. This bill does not represent the public lands vision I want my elected leaders to support.

The bill is unnecessary. 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.

This bill would result in more lawsuits and could cost the state millions of dollars. The bill is expensive. It would require costly rulemaking and lead to non-stop litigation the state would have to defend against at taxpayer expense. The bill creates a new, special right for the timber industry to sue the Department of Forestry to force more logging on state forests. The state can’t afford unneeded legislation with an

enormous fiscal impact.

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.

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

Thank you.