

Submitter: Sage Fox
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, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

I am a fisheries and aquatic biologist by training, and I am a current J.D. candidate at UW Law. I am writing in opposition of House Bill 4105.

The proposed bill prioritizes logging over all other forest values on state forests, despite the fact that logging benefits the fewest number of people for the shortest amount of time. The bill undermines the state forest Habitat Conservation Plan and would cause more clearcuts, more industry lawsuits, less habitat for fish and wildlife, and less carbon storage on state public forests. In this day in age when very few old-growth or structurally complex forests remain, the we need to shift our priorities to conservation about timber extraction.

Furthermore, this 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. There is no need to further accelerate already overconsumptive and non-sustainable logging.

The bill is also costly. It would require additional 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 increase carbon storage on our state forests and safeguard public state forests and waterways for current and future generations. Our forests are worth far more standing than in wood products. The market will adjust accordingly if we properly value our trees.

Please don't let this bill pass out of committee.

Sincerely,

Sage Fox