

Submitter: Rachel Smith

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 oppose House Bill 4105. This timber industry bill prioritizes logging over all other forest values on state forests. It lacks foresight and recklessly 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. It leaves no room for the sacred in our relationship with the land.

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.

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 increase carbon storage on our state forests and safeguard public state forests and waterways for current and future generations.

I worked in Forestry through the NW Timber Wars and took part in working with other stakeholders to protect the living networks of our forests. These networks can't be repaired with money and extractive timber practices.

They are living record holders of wisdom, water, nutrients and dynamic weather which we can learn from and interact in a balanced way of stewardship.

From my Native Elders, a prayer to the Earth,  
"When I cut you, I too bleed"

When Wall Street cuts trees in this unbalanced bill, I too bleed. As do our children, and future generations.

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

Sincerely,

Rachel N. Smith  
(Hanble Tatanka Wiya)