

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

Protect Oregon's State Forests & Finances - Oppose HB 4105

Oregonians support natural resource protection over logging. Recent polling by the Oregon Forest Resources Council shows that Oregonians value clean air, clean water and wildlife habitat over logging. This is consistent with polling conducted in 2022 by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center showing strong support for resource protection on state forests.

HB 4105 is a Timber Industry Bill That would increase industrial clearcut logging on Oregon's public lands. HB 4105 requires the state forester to establish 10-year logging levels, in annual increments, set through rulemaking. This would create additional pressure on the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to increase harvest levels at the expense of natural resource values cherished by Oregonians, and upset the balanced management on state forests by elevating logging over other values.

By establishing a mandatory harvest rule, the bill would elevate logging over clean air and water, fish and wildlife habitat, carbon storage and recreation. It would limit the state forester's and the Board of Forestry's ability to protect public resources and prevent the ODF from implementing its Climate Change and Carbon Plan. The bill would only require consideration, not compliance, with the Habitat Conservation Plan and other policies that protect clean water, fish and wildlife habitat and carbon capture.

HB 4105 is an expensive waste of taxpayers' and ODF time and money. Leads to increased litigation. The bill would create a new right for timber companies, counties and tax districts to sue the ODF for alleged violations of the timber harvest rule, creating endless litigation and limiting the ODF's ability to manage state forests for multiple values. Further, limiting who has the right to sue may be unconstitutional.

This bill is expensive. Based on 2025 fiscal impact estimates from an identical bill, implementation would require \$1.1 million of initial funding to start this program. The new right to sue the ODF would also cost the state significant resources in ODF and DOJ staff time and legal fees, estimated to upward of ten million dollars per biennium.

HB 4105 is moreover unnecessary—the State Forester already sets sustainable harvest levels consistent with the mandate to manage state forests for “Greatest Permanent Value” for all Oregonians and reports this to the public. The ODF has exceeded its harvest objectives over the past 10 years.

I do not support HB 4105 and demand you do not either.

Sincerely,
Erin Williams
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