

Submitter: David Kelley
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 writing today to voice my opposition to House Bill 4105 and its amendments. This bill would prioritize clear-cutting 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.

When I first moved to Oregon I fell in love with the beautiful mountains, forests, rivers, and lakes. The tranquil peace one can find in these natural areas and the communion with our animal and plant cousins is a necessary resource that we cannot diminish or destroy. However, in the last two decades I have seen alarming increases in clearcutting and other development. I used to love hiking up Saddle Mountain in the coast range, but now it's too painful to go there as the only thing you see from the top is a bunch of clear-cut hills that looks horrible. I truly believe that God made us caretakers of the Earth and we are not supposed to destroy his creation for our own selfish gain.

This bill would result in more lawsuits and could cost the state millions of dollars. It 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 (example of climate change impact you are experiencing). This bill does not represent the public lands vision I want my elected leaders to support.

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. Do not choose to let history remember you as someone who allowed Oregon's legacy and our beautiful natural resources to be sold to the highest bidder for short term profit.

Sincerely,
David Kelley