



EAST CASCADES BIRD ALLIANCE

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: East Cascades Bird Alliance

Re: Testimony in opposition to HB 4105

Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

I am writing on behalf of the East Cascades Bird Alliance (ECBA) to express our opposition to HB 4105. ECBA has hundreds of members across Central Oregon and beyond. Our members represent the growing numbers of people who appreciate birds, enjoy watching them, respect their right to exist, and are deeply concerned about the documented decline in nearly all bird populations across North America, especially here in Oregon. Our organization takes action to protect birds and conserve their needed habitats.

Little remains of Oregon's temperate, mature and old-growth forests that are the best suited forests for providing heat, wind, drought, and fire resilience to our changing climate. Only 5 percent of Oregon's virgin old growth exists today. To increase harvest here is short-sighted, particularly due to the decades of over-harvesting. The remaining pockets are refuges for not only birds, but other life forms as well, therefore as stewards of all resources, the State must protect them.

Like humans, birds in particular are suffering from the effects of excessive carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that is causing increased extremes in heat, drought and deluge, and smoke. This bill would undermine the ODF Climate Change and Carbon Plan because HB 4105 requires a rule establishing 10-year harvest levels that would override the Plan.

Oregon Law ORS 530.050, "greatest permanent value" (GPV), means healthy, productive, and sustainable forest ecosystems that over time and across the landscape provide a full range of social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon. These benefits include, but are not limited to:

(a) Sustainable and predictable production of forest products that generate revenues for the benefit of the state, counties, and local taxing districts;

- (b) Properly functioning aquatic habitats for salmonids, and other native fish and aquatic life;
- (c) Habitats for native wildlife;
- (d) Productive soil, and clean air and water;
- (e) Protection against floods and erosion; and
- (f) Recreation.”

Please do note that this GPV incorporates a wide array of values in addition to timber harvest, not one of which is acknowledged in HB 4105. Furthermore, ODF is not in a vacuum; it is part of the State of Oregon governance and must not undermine efforts of other State agencies. To pass this bill is to set up a conflict with ODFW mandates. Many species of birds identified in the ODFW’s Oregon Conservation Strategy rely on Oregon’s old-growth and mature forest ecosystems. Because HB 4105 would force the Department of Forestry to prioritize timber harvest over all other values of state forests, HB 4105 would result in an acceleration of clearcuts and loss of habitat for birds dependent on these remaining old growth forests. This would negatively and cumulatively impact bird survival and reproduction, as well as reduce the number of bird-loving citizens that contribute to birding-related businesses and jobs in Oregon.

It is also very important to understand that if passed, HB 4105 would undercut the objectives of HB 4134 (“1.25% for Wildlife”) that will enable ODFW to restore and conserve habitat that would lead to bird population recovery and subsequent delisting from the current State and Federal Endangered Species lists. And in the case of non-listed birds, HB 4134 would potentially diminish the needs of the State of Oregon or the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list them as endangered or threatened. Please realize 17 species of wildlife that depend upon the very landscapes that would be impacted if HB 4105 passes are currently listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. These species are listed because basic ecological functions and services are presently degraded and diminished, the birds are like canaries in the coal mine, telling us that the ecosystems on which humans rely are at risk.

If the Legislature intentionally eliminates mature and old-growth forests, knowing that this it is precisely the habitat that many imperiled bird and other species need to survive and reproduce, ODFW and ODF will be surely tied up in massive legal challenges that will cause the Department of Revenue and Oregon tax payers to pay for mounting expenses of litigation over violations of State and Federal environmental laws. Monies spent on attorney fees would indeed be better spent restoring and protecting our forests, to meet the responsible stewardship mandate expected of ODF.

It is important to understand that ODF has exceeded its harvest objectives over the past 10 years, which makes this bill unjustified “an emergency”. Additionally, the multitude of statements, conflicting with existing stated goals of the State of Oregon, make it difficult to believe HB 4105 is a serious bill since it sets up the State budget for heavy costs and hurts the people of Oregon.

Rather than supporting this bill, we ask you to focus on protecting Oregon’s mature and old-growth forests. With 95 percent of Oregon’s virgin old-growth forest gone forever, we implore you to protect the 5 percent that remains. While our organization is focused on conservation of birds and their habitats, we all know that there are hundreds of other life forms dependent on the essential ecosystems services provided by these remaining forests - moderating temperature extremes during climate change, supplying and storing clean water, cooling local atmosphere, and storing carbon.

Please with good conscience ECBA urges you to oppose this bill and ensure it does not pass out of committee.

Thank you,

Laurel Collins, ECBA Chair Conservation and Science Committee & Board Member
on behalf of East Cascades Bird Alliance