

Submitter: Rachel Hopkins

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 oppose House Bill 4105 and its amendments. This bill would prioritize clearcutting Oregon forests over other important values such as clean drinking water, clean air, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. It is unacceptable, unethical, and ecologically nonsensical to prioritize timber harvest over all the other values these forests offer.

I grew up in the lush green of Oregon's temperate rainforests, played for hours catching salamanders, wading in streams, picking huckleberries, and enjoying the magnificent splendor, peace, and beauty of these forests. Already, as a child I noticed the clear cuts and felt extremely saddened every time I saw them. I still do. I imagine what trees there used to be, how many hundreds of years they may have lived, what empires they watched rise and fall, what small ecosystems of their own lived among their grand crowns? Whenever I think of what has already been lost due to clearcutting my soul feels a wound that cannot be easily healed. At the very least, let's not make this wounding we have done our earth any worse than it already is. This is not the way.

Additionally, this bill would result in more lawsuits and could cost the state millions of dollars. There would be 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. 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.

Sincerely,
Rachel Hopkins