

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

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 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.

Increasing logging also reduces water quantity. Forests in Oregon function as critical natural reservoirs, capturing rainfall and slowly releasing it into streams and groundwater throughout the year. When forests are heavily logged, that storage capacity is diminished, leading to higher winter runoff and lower streamflows in the summer. Reduced summer flows threaten drinking water supplies for local communities and harm sensitive and federally protected species such as Pacific salmon that depend on consistent, cold water. Protecting intact forests is essential to maintaining reliable water supplies for both people and wildlife.

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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.

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

Sincerely,
David Herasimtschuk