



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

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February 11, 2026

The Honorable Ken Helm & Mark Owens, Co-Chairs
House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: HB 4105 - **SUPPORT**

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, and members of the Committee,

Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL) represents nearly 900 small, family-owned forest contracting businesses that provide the workforce to manage Oregon's forests, fight our wildfire, and support rural families. Our members support over 23,000 working families in Oregon. Our members are the loggers, road builders, truck drivers, and reforestation crews who ensure that Oregon's public and private forests remain productive, healthy, and accessible. These small businesses rely on predictable and sustainable timber harvests from state forests to keep their crews working and our rural economies strong.

HB 4105 is a good governance bill that strengthens transparency, accountability, and long-term certainty in state forest management. It simply ensures that the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) sets clear, sustainable harvest levels and follows through on them. It does nothing more and nothing less.

This is a critical step in rebuilding trust between ODF and the communities, businesses, and counties that depend on responsible forest management.

The Problem: A Lack of Transparency and Accountability

For years, ODF has relied on inaccurate harvest projections that have resulted in significant economic and operational instability. Just as we saw with the flawed data used in the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) process, shifting and unpredictable harvest levels create financial hardship for timber-dependent counties, uncertainty for small businesses, and operational challenges for ODF itself.

The agency's increasing reliance on General Fund dollars to cover budget shortfalls highlights the need for improved transparency and fiscal responsibility. Without clear and accountable harvest planning, Oregon risks moving away from a self-sustaining forest management model, placing an unnecessary burden on taxpayers while undermining local economies.

The Fiscal Reality: State Forests Need a Healthy Forest Development Fund

Oregon's state forests are supposed to pay their own way. The State Forests Division is funded through timber sale receipts, not General Fund dollars, and those receipts flow through the Forest Development Fund. Those same revenues also help support counties and special taxing districts, and they fund ODF's Recreation, Education, and Interpretation (REI) programs. In other words: when the state forests program performs as promised, the Legislature does not have to backfill agency costs, county budgets, or public-facing programs like REI.

But we are seeing warning signs. In our written comments submitted January 31, we flagged negative trends in the Forest Development Fund. As the fund balance drops, ODF has to reassess what it is capable of achieving. That can mean less work for contractors and less capacity to reduce wildfire risk and keep forests accessible.

A Trusted Partner for Oregon's Forest Operators

If this trend continues, the state forest program risks insolvency. In plain terms, it cannot keep up with basic costs without outside help. That should be unacceptable for a major public asset that has historically funded itself and supported local services.

The Board of Forestry is already discussing a clear expectation to keep the FDF at a healthy level, often described as six to twelve months of operating costs. The Legislature should care because every dollar raised from state timber sales is a dollar that does not need to be appropriated from the General Fund. State timber revenue also helps support counties, special taxing districts, and critical county services. HB 4105 helps you hold ODF accountable for managing this public forest asset for the greatest permanent value, with a net benefit to Oregonians.

The Solution: HB 4105 Brings Transparency, Accountability, and Certainty

This bill directs the state forester to:

- Establish and publish sustainable harvest levels that balance economic, environmental, and community needs.
- Base those levels on sound data to improve planning and management.
- Develop a modern timber inventory model to track forest conditions and guide responsible decision-making and management.
- Ensure timber sales align with sustainable harvest calculations to support rural communities and local jobs.
- Provide greater transparency and accountability in managing state forests, ensuring follow-through on what the Department says it's going to do

This does not increase harvest levels or roll back environmental protections. Instead, it ensures that ODF commits to a clear, science-based plan, and then follows through. The state's own timber-dependent counties, small businesses, and contractors should not be left guessing what harvest levels will look like from year to year.

Why This Matters for Oregon's Forest Workforce

AOL's members collectively employ nearly 23,000 Oregonians, providing the workforce necessary to manage our forests. These businesses need long-term certainty, not just in an Annual Operations Plan, but in a transparent and accountable framework that ensures stability for the many years and decades ahead.

Oregon's forest operators need follow through to keep crews working and equipment operating. The Legislature has a key role here: holding agencies accountable and ensuring Oregon's great public forest asset remains an asset. HB 4105 is a practical step in that direction.

AOL urges your support for HB 4105.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Amanda Sullivan-Astor, CF

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