

Submitter: Alissa Runyon

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, 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.

The bill is unnecessary. The Department of Forestry already has processes in place to establish timber harvest goals and regularly meets or exceeds those goals, often at the expense of water quality, imperiled species, and carbon storage.

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. We should be prioritizing community and nature over industry and corporations. There are many far more critical uses of taxpayer dollars for the care and upkeep of our communities than spending it on costly litigation that was unnecessary to create in the first place.

I grew up in 4-H which has made me painfully aware of the incredible harm to the environment that unnecessary logging causes. The harm caused by even one overzealous year can be irreversible or at least take decades to repair. Allowing the timber industry to control the amount of logging would be a critical and catastrophic mistake.

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, safeguard public state forests and waterways for current and future generations, and preserve the nature around us. We are so fortunate to get to live in such a beautiful place and it is our duty to be good stewards of that gift. This bill spits in the face of both the gift we have been given and those who have come before us and prioritized the care of the lands we call home.

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

Sincerely,  
Alissa Runyon