

Submitter: Scott Weber

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 stand in opposition to House Bill 4105. This bill overreaches and would predictably weaken protections for Oregon's public state forests. I believe that most Oregonians appreciate the myriad values encompassed in our shared-resource forestlands and would be firmly opposed to the mandatory harvest rule in HB 4105.

The State Forester already establishes (and publicly reports) sustainable harvest levels deemed consistent with the management mandate for "Greatest Permanent Value" for all Oregonians. Notably, the ODF has exceeded its harvest objectives over the past 10 years. The bill is unnecessary and redundant.

Western Oregon holds more than 600,000 acres of state public forestlands, home to 17 endangered or at-risk species and encompassing six critical rivers for salmon recovery. In a dramatically warming climate, with increasing temperatures threatening salmon runs and imperiling wildlife, informed stewardship of our forestlands must uphold environmental health and sustainable practices. Elevated clearcut logging is at odds with this. Protecting state forestlands essentially protects vital habitat for wildlife, as well as protects clean drinking water for more than half-a-million Oregon residents and visitors.

Our state forestlands support 10,500+ jobs and a robust \$550M outdoor recreation economy. The ODF is presently evaluating plans, along with timber dependent counties (including the county where I reside), to increase timber harvests and revenue from state forests for the next ten years. This must be done in full compliance with the state forest Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Oregonians will not brook any limits on the Board of Forestry's and state forester's ability to protect our public resources. Neither will we accept obstructing the ODF from implementing its Climate Change and Carbon Plan.

This "timber industry wish-list" bill is even worse than its rejected predecessor. This new bill would create an exceptional privilege for timber companies, counties and tax districts to sue the ODF for alleged violations of the timber harvest rule. It would carve a preferred path leading to expensive litigation. It would also disrupt the ODF's balanced management of state forests based on multiple values (clean air and water, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and carbon capture capacity).

I urge you to reject this bill in committee.