

Submitter: Marilyn Costamagna

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 critical values such as clean drinking water, clean air, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. Our state forests are worth more standing — it is unacceptable to prioritize timber harvest over all the other values these forests offer.

Why are Oregon's mature and old growth forests so irreplaceable? Because of their legacy to the earth and that is why they are also called legacy forests.

Here are some key issues that stress the importance of why HB 4015 and its amendments should be opposed:

Oregon's mature and old-growth forests (also called legacy forests) are widely recognized for their essential role in fighting climate change, protecting watershed integrity, and safeguarding fish and wildlife. Decades of logging have left a severe deficit of old-growth forests on Oregon's state lands.

Mature and old-growth legacy forests in Oregon's temperate rain forest region are well positioned to survive the disturbance-enhancing effects of climate change, including wildfires, and they offer incredible outdoor recreation opportunities.

Old-growth trees confer fire resilience to forests, thanks to their high moisture content, thick bark, and lack of ladder fuels that lead to crown fires. Together, adaptations like these make it difficult for fire to ignite tree boles (trunks) or climb into canopies in larger/older trees, particularly in western fire-adapted forest types. Legacy trees help buffer forests from extreme heat and drought, with deep roots that enhance water storage and access and cooler microclimates under the shade of their leaves.

Legacy forests protect and provide clean drinking water for millions of Americans, yet remain a rarity on the landscape after centuries of aggressive timber logging.

Legacy forests maintain ecosystem functions and serve as a refuge from both climate change and fire impacts for valued fish and wildlife species.

Legacy are carbon storage powerhouses. Large, older trees store a disproportionately high amount of carbon and continue to sequester carbon throughout their centuries long lifetimes.

This bill would result in more lawsuits and could cost the state millions of dollars.

This bill would also result in 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 HB 4105 and ensure that it does not pass out of committee.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Costamagna