

Submitter: Jim Steitz

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4105

As a former resident of Oregon, I urge you to recognize that your State Forests are an ecological treasure, holding precious vestiges of Oregon's ecological splendor and richness, after decades of disposal and logging eliminated the majority of Oregon's original primary forests. The fantastically vibrant and diverse vegetation and wildlife living upon them, possess an intrinsic moral value and are worth more to the public interest of Oregon than any revenue that could be raised from logging them under the sullen pretense of mere timber production. The protection of these ecosystems in the public trust should not depend upon any perfunctory, lazy, outdated arrangement for monetizing the forest in exchange for local government accounts. Oregon is a wealthy state, with ample resources for funding schools, and there is no law of man or nature that a State Forest must be chainsawed as the price for existing. The biological facts before us demand that Oregon State Forests enjoy the utmost protection, not condemned to a fate of logging merely because past fiscal arrangements of convenience misidentified them as commodity producers, or due to an agency's inertial habits of ecological malfeasance.