



Association of Northwest Steelheaders

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Established 1960

February 14, 2012

To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

From: Ian Fergusson, Resources Director

Re: HB 4098

MEASURE: HB 4098
EXHIBIT: 16
2012 SPECIAL SESSION H AG & NAT RES.
DATE: 2/14/2012 PAGES: 1
SUBMITTED BY: Ian Fergusson

The Association of Northwest Steelheaders was established in 1960. Our 1300 members are dedicated to the conservation of cold-water fisheries and the perpetuation of responsible angling. Our membership is strongly blue-collar. We understand the importance of forest jobs. We believe strongly in a balanced approach to forest management. Several years ago we elected to become involved in state forest management issues because of the effects that forest management can have on water quality and fish habitat.

We oppose HB 4098. It would bypass the existing public process for determining management of state forests. By mandating a high level of timber harvest on state forests, it would also conflict with the "Greatest Permanent Value" administrative rule, which serves as a guide for the Board of Forestry in managing state forests. The GPV rule calls for "a full range of social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon", and requires that state forest management be based on the best available science. HB 4098 is not based on the best available science; it is based on a desired level of output.

In January, after a two-and-a-half year public process, the Board of Forestry affirmed the current definition of Greatest Permanent Value. The Board has moved on to begin a discussion of the ways state forests can be managed consistent with Governor Kitzhaber's vision, which calls for an integrated statewide approach to managing forests across all ownerships.

Public polling conducted on behalf of the Department of Forestry in 2006 revealed that 70% of Oregonians agree that the Department does a good job of managing state forests. This high level of confidence validates the current public process for creating policy on state forests.

The current process allows for considerable public and industry input. The process can be slow and frustrating at times for participants on all sides of any given issue. However, it is still the appropriate way to set management policy on state forests, which belong to all Oregonians. We believe HB 4098 would short-circuit that process and impose an approach to state forest management that contradicts the desire of the majority of Oregonians.

We request that you honor the existing public process, and not pass HB 4098 out of this committee. Thank you.