



February 14, 2012

**Testimony before the House Committee on
Agriculture and Natural Resources on HB 4098**

MEASURE: HB 4098
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Chairs Clem and Esquivel,

My name is Ivan Maluski and I am the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club. We are urging your opposition to HB 4098. This bill would drastically change management on more than 500,000 acres of state owned forest to make timber production the primary use of these lands. Mandated logging levels similar to what is found on industrial timber lands would have significant negative impacts to water quality, recreation, and salmon recovery on publicly owned state forests and mark a significant rollback of current state forest management plans which require a more balanced approach between logging and other uses of state lands like the Tillamook, Clatsop, and Santiam State Forests.

HB 4098 specifically mandates that annual logging levels on state forest lands be '95 percent of the annual amount of harvestable timber expected to be grown on state forest lands,' upsetting current management plans and approaches to the 'greatest permanent value' on these lands which have won the support from a diverse array of stakeholders on the Board of Forestry, from mill owners, to labor union representatives, to conservationists. Current management plans allow the Oregon Department of Forestry significant administrative flexibility to manage based on both ecological and economic factors, but this bill would tie ODF's hands, forcing them to dramatically increase logging even if no market for the wood exists. If this bill had been adopted at the outset of housing crisis, it would have proven disastrous and amounted to a giveaway of public resources to private industry. Passing this bill is no more advisable today than it would have been in 2009 or 2011.

Despite strong public support for adding increased protection for clean water, recreation areas and salmon habitat on state lands, HB 4098 would instead maximize logging and roadbuilding on publicly owned state forest lands at the expense of fish, wildlife, recreation and clean water. This is not an insignificant impact. Research conducted for the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife show that in 2008 alone, activities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and shellfishing contributed nearly \$150 million to the economies of Tillamook and Clatsop Counties. The vast majority of this revenue (\$136.5 million) was 'travel generated,' with visitors traveling from greater than 50 miles away to spend money in the two counties. Travel related revenue for these activities was highest in the North Coast region than any other region of the state.¹ State forest management that protects and enhances clean water, salmon habitat, and recreational opportunities on state lands contribute to this recreation economy, and approaches such as HB 4098 will undermine this important part of the North Coast's economy.

¹ Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife Viewing, and Shellfishing in Oregon; Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Dean Runyan Associates; May, 2009



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Further, some have argued that this legislation is about job creation. We disagree. Because of mechanization and efficiency within the timber industry over the past two decades, as well as the growth in raw log exports coupled with the crashed domestic housing market that has closed down mills in recent years, any job creation numbers touted by the proponents of this bill are likely to be highly inflated. Consider the fact that as timber harvests in Tillamook and Clatsop Counties more than doubled from 160 million board feet in 1990 to 351 million board feet in 2006 at the peak of the housing boom, jobs in lumber, plywood, and other wood products in the two counties grew from 1,240 in 1990 to 1,268 in 2006 (Oregon Employment Department). The models that the Oregon Department of Forestry uses to predict the employment effects of increased harvests would have predicted an increase of 1,000 jobs where in fact an increase of just 28 jobs during a time of nearly doubled harvests in the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests.

HB 4098 reflects an extreme view of the role of timber production on public lands. The key to balanced state lands management is to include timber as one of multiple uses, not making it the dominant use. In addition to the positive attributes of the recreational and fishing economies discussed above, we believe there is a place for active restoration on state forest lands. The University of Oregon's Ecosystem Workforce Program has spent years studying the economic benefits of watershed restoration. Recent studies they have conducted suggest that every \$1 million in public investment in forest and watershed restoration creates between 14.7-23.8 total jobs.² In addition to removing unnecessary roads and replacing undersized culverts, aquatic restoration can include log and boulder placements, streambank stabilization, thinning, fuel reduction, stream channel reconfiguration, fish passage improvements, wetland restoration, small dam removal and erosion control. Many of these activities require skilled contractors often from local communities with knowledge of appropriate equipment, engineering, and aquatic processes.

Again, we urge your opposition to HB 4098 and your support for balanced state forest management.

² Economics and Employment Impacts of Forest and Watershed Restoration in Oregon; Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon; Spring, 2010