

Union County Cattlemen
61931 Cottonwood Rd.
La Grande, OR 97850
March 25, 2013

Energy and Environment Committee

900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chairman Bailey and Committee Members:

HB3337 is not good policy for Oregon. It fails to promote “good governance” of the state and represents a bias advocacy for conservation over and above good land and resource management activities and use of resources.

Current law authorizes DEQ and State Lands to administer mitigation credit trading programs for water quality and wetlands respectively. ORS 468.587 provides enough guidance for Oregon at this time for ecosystem services mitigation. This bill expands the government’s role, but fails to identify a structure for regulations. It is an open-ended idea and should not be considered during this session. Without more specification about who will pay for costs related to verification, monitoring, and inspection of mitigation credits, HB 3337 should not be moved forward.

How will the state determine good stewardship among the agricultural and forest landowners and how will good stewardship be differentiated from bad stewardship? Too many environmental advocates question the activities of agriculture and forest landowners and use accusations riddled with phantom risks to gain attention while ignoring a fundamental, rationale of facts. HB 3337 creates and contributes to an argumentative atmosphere that is toxic in Oregon.

The pace of conservation and habitat restoration in the recovery of species and ecosystems in the last 20 years has contributed to a poor economy in Oregon and this bill does not reflect a statewide discussion with landowners and citizens, which is necessary for positive outcomes and acceptance in the future. Legislation has busied some agencies with activities to “save” fish, plants, and birds but they have done so without identifying the success and failure lines that Oregon needs to objectively measure the outcomes. Funds from the state budget (lottery funds and grants) are allocated over and over in perpetuity and the taxpayers still do not know the success rates for plant or animal species. HB 3337 has references to restoration, conservation, biodiversity, and enhancement that are descriptive but not tangible parts of the landscape. Which Oregon state agency is capable of regulating biodiversity? How much species diversity is enough and at what time will restoration reach a level of success?

During this legislative session the Energy and Environment Committee members should focus on reducing natural resource regulations in state agencies that hinder sustainable land and resource uses. Oregon needs to take a stand to promote reliance on scientific facts that have been identified through decades of experimental studies and

replicated through time and space. Natural resource use historically provided a strong work force in the state and it is evident that until we get back to a more realistic understanding about the environment, Oregon will lag behind. The Committee should seek legislation that promotes facts over fear regarding energy development and environmental management.

Union County Cattlemen are not in favor of HB 3337 and urge the Committee members to consider tabling this bill for another time. As presented we favor a no pass by the House Energy and Environment Committee.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments for the record.

Sincerely,

Union County Cattlemen
La Grande, OR 97850

Dennis Murchison, President
Jason Beck, Vice-President
Pat Larson, Secretary