

*Union County Cattlemen*  
61931 Cottonwood Rd.  
La Grande, OR 97850  
April 9, 2013

Senate Environment and Natural Resource Committee  
900 Court St. NE Rm 347  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Senate Bill SB 476

Chair Dingfelder and Committee Members:

Union County Cattlemen strongly opposes SB 476. The bill does not recognize the severe and confounding factors that have developed since 1969 with the enactment of the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The process has become an open invitation to litigation, requires time consuming work within the federal agencies, and should be returned to Congress for updated revisions and clarification. The intent and purpose of the Act has been eroded over time and politics has taken it over as a vehicle to threaten or instigate litigation.

This bill will add to the cost of doing business in Oregon. The state budget concerns are already slowing economic progress and it is apparent the state agencies do not need more encumbrances on the work they must perform. This bill may diminish the willingness of citizens to voluntarily participate in restoration activities and/or retain interest in the state grant programs. The bill does not promote jobs or add to the economic viability of rural Oregon where good land management is a primary concern and always a goal.

The preparation of environmental impact statements requires long term as well as short term data collections including data interpretation using the “best available science” (BAS) which includes a statistical analysis of the measurements. The bill does not define the BAS term and we can only conclude that each agency employs statisticians capable of providing this level of appropriate data interpretation. If not, the BAS definition may cause confusion about what is and what is not BAS.

SB 476 also does not address any provision for an economic analysis such as a cost/benefit assessment for projects that may require an environmental impact statement. As a result, this bill is not ready for Oregon law. There are better ways to address environmental protection and assessments of the impacts project activities may or may not have on specific resources.

We are opposed to SB 476. We do not need more laws. We do need a better economy, more jobs, and this will not improve our current situation.

We urge a no vote on this bill.

Sincerely,

Union County Cattlemen members

Dennis Murchison, President

Jason Beck, Vice-President

Pat Larson, Secretary