



North Coast State Forest Coalition

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To: Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: April 11, 2013

RE: Senate Bill 357

Good afternoon, Chair Roblan and members of the committee. My name is Rhett Lawrence and I am the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. I'm here today to provide testimony on behalf of the North Coast State Forest Coalition, a coalition of five organizations that seek balanced management of Oregon's state forests. We respectfully request that you not support SB 357, which directs a far stronger emphasis on timber production on Oregon's state-owned lands.

As you know, the vast majority of state forests are "Board of Forestry" lands owned by all the people of Oregon and are legally mandated to be managed for "greatest permanent value." These lands were acquired under statutes that sought a multiple-use objective, including timber harvests, water quality, recreation, and watershed protection. The direction provided in SB 357 would take these lands away from a multiple-use approach and toward an approach that emulates private forest product companies. We believe a shift in this direction would be inconsistent with both the historic "greatest permanent value" mandate for these forests, as well as with the balanced approach favored by our organizations and others.

Numerous state leaders, including the Governor, the Board of Forestry, and various county commissioners have spoken in support of a balanced management approach on our state forests. A balanced approach was recently affirmed by the Board of Forestry after an extensive public process that included numerous stakeholders. As you likely know, the Board of Forestry itself includes two of seven members directly employed by the timber industry, but the Board vote for the current balanced approach was unanimous. Just last week, the Washington County Commission unanimously passed a resolution in favor of a balanced approach that included conservation area designations. Coastal cities like Rockaway and Wheeler have also recently supported conservation areas on state forests as part of a balanced and sound forest plan.

We believe that support for a balanced approach on state forests will also provide the greatest long-term economic and social benefits. The rich salmon fisheries supported by the Tillamook and Clatsop Forest rivers, the abundant recreation opportunities to the half-million residents of Washington County (which includes over 45,000 acres of state forest), and the clean drinking water provided to the residents and high-tech factories of Northwest Oregon all deserve strong consideration in balance with the revenues from timber harvests. Timber production is an important component of our state forests, but it should not be the only one.

A coalition of conservation and fishing groups working together for a balanced plan to protect the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests' natural legacy.

Association of NW Steelheaders ~ Oregon Chapter Sierra Club ~ Oregon Council Trout Unlimited
Northwest Guides and Anglers Association ~ Wild Salmon Center

In conclusion, the Sierra Club and the North Coast State Forest Coalition believes that the future of Oregon's state forests should include a mix of harvest areas that put a greater focus on timber production, as well as a network of conservation areas that put more emphasis on protecting aquatic systems, older forest habitats, and popular recreation areas. SB 357 moves us away from that vision by promoting timber harvest over other values and so we urge you to oppose it.

Thank you for considering our coalition's thoughts and I'd be happy to take any questions.