

Testimony on the Pole Building Bill – HB 2441

April 18, 2013

Good Afternoon,

Senator Roblan and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Gordon Culbertson. I am a resident of Lane County and a small woodland owner. Our family business, Whitewater Forests owns and sustainably manages about 120 acres of forestland in Lane and Douglas Counties.

Our primary business is to grow and harvest commercial timber for sale to local log buyers. Both of our tree farms are certified under the American Tree Farm System.

To perform our business activities we own a small amount of equipment and vehicles including a small crawler tractor, quad all terrain vehicle and a water tank and pump trailer for forest fire protection.

We have a considerable investment in this machinery and we try hard to maintain it in good working order. An important part of that care is protecting it from inclement weather.

This machinery is used exclusively on our forest tracts. Our forestland is located a fairly long distance from our home place. Because of the logistics involved in moving the machinery, during the winter season we prefer to leave it on the tree farms where we use it in the course of business.

In an effort to protect our machinery, I recently investigated the purchase and construction of a simple pole building to give us a dry and secure place to park our machinery. I decided that our tree farm, located on Penn Road in West Lane County would be a great place for this small structure.

I inquired with a local company who quoted me a price to produce and deliver a well designed pre-fabricated building kit that would meet our needs. The wood building would be 20x24 feet, supported with poles and protected with a metal roof. No electrical or plumbing – just a small covered garage with a gravel floor. They recommended a contractor available to help me

put it up and the price sounded like a reasonable investment. I was pretty excited to get going on this.

I had known that there was an exemption to allow for agricultural structures, not requiring a building permit. But I wasn't sure about forestry, so I inquired with Lane County.

Quite soon it became clear that my small simple structure to protect my forestry machinery wasn't so simple after all. For my building to be constructed, I discovered the following:

1. Yes, we would need a building permit because it's not a farm building. The structure would be treated as if it were for human occupancy.
2. Engineered building specifications were required.
3. Pre-inspection either by on-site visit or possibly a photo review.
4. A site plan review and permit review meeting with the county officials.
5. A fuel exclusion area for fire prevention, just like a home would require, effectively forcing me not to grow any young trees maybe within hundreds of feet surrounding the building.
6. Two copies of a site plan, drawn to standard engineering requirements on 11x17 sheets must be presented.
7. A Building permit application form, site plan, two more sets of plans including an engineering analysis, foundation plan, floor plan, cross sections and detail, elevation view, floor and roof framing plan, wall bracing, engineering calculations and truss specifications from the manufacturer would all be required.
8. Also, my building kit is likely not suitable for forest land. It's for farm use, but forestry is another thing all together.
9. Payment of \$350 fee is due at the meeting, in addition to previous fee for hundreds of dollars for approval of site plan.
10. Lastly, county zoning restrictions may prohibit my pole building entirely and if my building is rejected none of these fees are refundable.

After considering these requirements it quickly became clear my simple building was not to be. It turned into a "lose-lose" situation for everyone.

1. There would be no building to protect our machinery.

2. Neither the local company that makes and sells the building kits, nor the building contractor would have the business.
3. Oregon lumber wouldn't be sold and used to construct a quality building.
4. How ironic that it was *virtually impossible* for a structure made mostly of Oregon wood products to be built on a forest farm where trees are grown for those wood products.
5. As we speak, my water pumper trailer, specifically owned and maintained for the purpose of protecting forest resources from the summer's fire season is rusting in the rain.

Small Woodland owners perform an important and crucial role in the management of Oregon forestlands. Many sawmills rely on timber produced from our woodlands. We enhance wildlife habitat, water quality and recreational experiences.

Farmers and foresters each share a common, long-standing role; making a significant economic and environmental contribution to the state. Agriculture and forestry are very much the same process with planting, growth, stewardship and harvest. Each requires an investment in tools of the trade to be successful. A reasonable expectation is that similar business endeavors would be treated equally.

House Bill 2441 offers an equitable solution to treat farmers and foresters on equal footing when it comes to practical and reasonable storage for our tools. I urge you to give it your support.

Thank you for your consideration,

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