

Statement in Favor of Senate Bill 349

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 349, the "Farm License Plates for Forestry Vehicles" proposed legislation.

I live on 194 acres of forest land in western Lane County near Florence. The property consists of forest land exhibiting a mix of conifers, Red Alder and other typical forest vegetation associated with coastal forest. (Read underbrush.)

I believe that there is ample justification for the issuance of farm license plates for vehicles involved in forest management. The following examples of use are from my own experience but I believe would be typical of other small woodland owners.

In previous years I have transported Red Alder logs to a mill in the Reedsport/Smith River area. This mill was 22 miles from our tree farm. My transport of product involved a flat-bed goose neck type trailer and a one ton pickup licensed to haul 26,000 pounds gross combined vehicle weight. This combination resulted in a payload of six tons. Log lengths ranged from 10 feet up to 31 feet. Generally, 20 foot logs were the best to load, haul and to satisfy the log buyer.

The mill I was hauling to is now defunct so I have not recently been hauling any Red Alder. However there has been production of some small diameter Douglas Fir from a 20 year old plantation. These logs were generated by a road realignment and rehab project and were utilized by Southport Lumber Company of Coos Bay.

These two examples of product type are what I believe would be common to other small woodland owners. If they were so inclined, woodland owners could easily haul these products with a proper vehicle/combo. It is convenient and economically feasible to do so.

Other products that I have hauled include 6 x 6 landscape timbers sold to Coos Head Lumber Company's treatment plant in Hauser. Similar product in longer lengths up to 16 feet was hauled to Conrad Lumber Company, also in Hauser for treatment. The latter product was for personal use on the tree farm.

The trailer can also be adapted to haul gravel or soil for projects on the property.

Benefits:

1. Lower costs for farm license plate over regular truck license plate. (\$745)

2. Facilitate landowner to sell/haul and get into the economy products that would probably be left in the forest due to small size and insufficient quantity to be hauled by a "regular" log truck.
3. Facilitate good harvest practice by allowing smaller quantities to be stored, decked and prepared for transport. Products could be moved along in a timely manner which is important to the production of Red Alder logs.
4. No significant conflict with regular log trucks. The products are generally too small or short to be easily hauled by large truck.

Economic benefits:

1. Purchase of fuel and lubricants.
2. Purchase of tires, batteries, etc.
3. Purchase of maintenance services.
4. Employment for:
 - A. Log buyers.
 - B. Log Scalers
 - C. Millworkers
 - D. Treatment plant employees.
5. Overall benefits for Oregon's economy from the revenue and paychecks to which the small woodland owner contributes.

Concerns:

I believe the bill as written is good, but I suggest that the vehicle combination be the determining factor in length of product to be transported. (Vehicle/trailer combined wheelbase + one third of that length) In my opinion, a weight restriction of 26,000 pounds is appropriate.

As stated previously, I do not believe farm license vehicles would compete with regular log trucks. Large diameter logs or long lengths would not be reasonable for a typical small woodland owner vehicle.

Thank you for your time and interest in this proposed legislation. Allowing farm license plates for forestry vehicles is a good thing and an appropriate extension of this privilege.