



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry

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April 27th, 2015

Honorable Chris Edwards, Chair
Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Committee
Room S-411, State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301



Re: House Bill 2453A – Relating to commercial events on state forestlands

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Forestry appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2453.

Large, unpermitted, commercial social events, such as overnight “rave” parties drawing hundreds of people and vehicles, have raised serious public safety, law enforcement, fire danger and resource damage concerns in state forests, particularly the Clatsop and Tillamook. This bill would make conducting large, commercial events on state forests without proper permitting a Class A misdemeanor.

While most rave parties are single-night events, some are marketed as two- or three-day music festivals. It’s not unusual for these events to draw 300 to 800 people and several hundred vehicles. The Tillamook County Sheriff’s Office reports responding to several such events on state forests each year. The Clatsop County Sheriff reports an increase in these events in the past five years.

Authorities report problems including illegal drug use, other criminal activity, a high likelihood of sexual assault, sanitation concerns, unsafe or intoxicated driving that has caused injuries, dangerous use of fire with high risk of wildfire, extensive garbage dumping, road and resource damage and vandalism. Some specific incidents include:

- Nineteen raves on the Tillamook and Clatsop State Forests in 2014. Several more were shut down prior to starting through law enforcement patrols and intelligence-gathering.
- Risk of serious injury or death associated with violent, riotous, and irresponsible activity.
- Fires outside of designated campgrounds at a gathering in the summer of 2013.
- At least five reported rave parties in the Tillamook State Forest in May and June of 2013 requiring joint responses from Tillamook, Clatsop, Columbia and Washington County authorities.
- Unsafe and illegal activities held far from law enforcement resources impacting the ability to respond and decreasing the likelihood of detection and intervention.
- Damage to State Forest lands including littering, road damage and poor sanitation.

Public safety agencies and the Department of Forestry lack the resources to address these issues. Tillamook County and Clatsop County Sheriff Offices are both supportive of this bill, having experienced significant challenges associated with these activities as well as tragic vehicle accidents as participants have left these events. The promoters often communicate about upcoming events such that law enforcement cannot monitor