

Dear Chair Clem and members of the House Ag and Natural Resources Committee,

House Bill 3226 will come before you for a hearing at your meeting the morning of March 30th. This bill would overturn the Oregon Forest Practices Act and replace it with an over-reaching and dictatorial set of forest practices rules that would sweep away private property rights. Private property rights are a cornerstone in the foundation of private land ownership in Oregon. I respectfully ask you to please oppose HB 3266.

The first two pages of this 27 page bill establish the premises for the various bill sections that follow. These are the “whereas” statements and the majority of them are unfounded, overstated, or patently wrong. For example, “Whereas the Oregon Forest Practices Act has changed little in over 30 years...”, is an inaccurate statement. The Forest Practices Act is an ever-evolving set of regulations that has been changed numerous times over the past 30 years. Another example, “Whereas the Oregon Forest Practices Act contains barriers to public participation and good governance...”, is a patently false statement. The Department of Forestry and Board of Forestry bend over backwards to be inclusive and encourage public participation in forest practices discussions. Inclusive advisory committees are appointed, when the Board engages in a rule-making process and their work is taken seriously by the Board and the Department. The proponents of HB 3226 have had ample opportunity to be involved in these public processes. You can’t construct a good bill on a foundation of bad premises.

I have a rather unique set of perspectives regarding the Oregon Forest Practices Act. I have been a contract logger working directly with forest practices regulations, since the inception of the Act in the early 1970s. I am a long time small woodland owner. I currently work for a family-owned company and one of the larger forestland owners in the mid-Coast Range. Finally, I served for six years on the Oregon Board of Forestry. From all of those perspectives, I can tell you that the Oregon Forest Practices Act serves us well. It is protective of public resources. It is balanced. It encourages the Department’s Stewardship Foresters, who enforce the Act, to interact with landowners to find workable solutions to the on the ground challenges. There is no good reason to replace the Forest Practices Act with the draconian HB 3226.

Again, please vote no on House Bill 3226.

Thank you for hearing me and for your service to Oregon.

Sincerely,

Gary Springer
1060 SE Marion Ave.
Corvallis, Or. 97333
(541) 757-8665
Springer@starkerforests.com