

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Representative Brian Clem (Chair)  
Representative Sherrie Sprenger  
Representative Susan McClain  
Representative Greg Barreto  
Representative Sal Esquivel  
Representative Karin Power  
Representative David Brock Smith  
Representative Brad Witt  
Representative Cindy McKeown

Testimony in support of HB 3226 from David Eisler, Walton, Oregon

I own and manage 160 acres of forestland in the Coast Range. Our timber stands have been FSC certified over the last 20 years. On average we thin areas of the stands every five years. Our management goals are for long term biodiversity and forest health while harvesting sustainable volumes of hardwoods and softwoods. I reluctantly send some of our logs to local mills because we can never compete with the timber industry with mill prices that reflect large volumes of logs coming off thousands of acres of clear cuts. Sustainable long term thinning and individual tree selection requires smaller equipment and more manual labor making our cost per log higher. Some of us nonindustrial forestland owners run small portable saw mills to produce specialty lumber for building, cabinetry, furniture and flooring.

It is extremely important for legislators to understand that truly sustainable long term forest management provides critical public benefits not provided by industrial short rotation clear cutting. Our healthy forests contribute to cleaner and colder water, water storage, air quality, carbon storage, wildlife habitat including habitat for endangered species, connectivity to public land resources, habitat that supports thousands of critical soil organisms, hundreds of plant and animal species. These complex, healthy forests provide a hedge against the impacts of climate change. Within stands with multiple ages and multiple species summer temperatures are lower and soils maintain more moisture. In winter the temperatures in the stands are warmer than in industrial mono crop plantations. Complex stands mitigate against the extremes of weather that is a recognized climate change factor. Multi species stands are less vulnerable to catastrophic wild fires and less vulnerable to drought, heat stress and diseases. The current Swiss needle cast crisis is an example of how industrial plantations have not only hosted the fungal pathogen but are responsible for the increase in severity and frequency within the coastal forests where industry has replaced the original Sitka Spruce forests with their higher valued douglas fir monocrop plantations.

Managers of healthy forests are not financially rewarded for their contribution to the public good. Sustainable management requires more on the ground labor. We do not invest in high tech equipment like forward loaders that cut the standing trees at the base,

remove limbs, measure and cut to length eliminating the need for numerous workers. Last year we hired three separate contractors that employed a total of 10 field employees for less than 25 acres of thinning and planting.

The benefits of truly sustainable forest management seem self evident. How can legislators move private forestry in that direction? Provide incentives. Reduce or eliminate the tax on harvested timber for long-term sustainable harvests. Increase the tax on high impact extractive forestry to provide assistance payments for sustainable forestry. Develop a carbon market which pays forestland landowners to leave tracts uncut for varying periods of time. Shift the millions of dollars that have gone to the Oregon Forest Research Institute that has been used for educational programs and informational brochures that are essentially PR for the industrial forestry model and shift those funds to programs and information that educate the public in models for the management of healthy forests.

The State of Oregon should invest in forest management that benefits ALL Oregonians by providing incentives for responsible long term forest management RATHER THAN supporting industrial management that yields high profits for global investors while creating costs for the people of Oregon. As we enter the unavoidable period of climate change the vast acreage of industrial plantations will not fare well. Legislators need to consider and anticipate the consequences for our state's economy and it's natural resources.

I urge you to consider HB 3226