

Chair Clem, Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

Our names are Stephen and Wylde Cafferata, our address is 82166 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, OR 97431. We represent the interests of the Cafferata Family Forest, our family woodland property. We are opposed to House Bill 3226.

We are small woodland owners who manage our property to achieve these five goals: Model good forest management to produce forest crops; provide a diversity of wildlife habitat; establish an Oregon-woods multi-generational family gathering spot; operate a family small business; and use forest work as a means to keep mentally and physically fit. Passage of House Bill 3226 would compromise all of these goals.

Section 2 of House Bill 3226 requires the Board of Forestry to establish numerical criteria for nine aspects of forest management as well as any other area the Board delineates. All forestry is local. As we work on our forest land, we set these criteria in response to what is ecologically appropriate, sustainable and economically feasible for each unit. No one knows our land better than we do, and setting our own criteria is an integral part of our land management. Passage of this aspect of the bill would compromise all five of our goals.

Section 7 of House Bill 3226 changes the current “notification of intent” to harvest, replacing it with “approval of a timber harvest plan.” As small woodland owners who do not harvest frequently, it is important for us to take advantage of market conditions when we do harvest. The approval process allows the State Forester 30 days to approve a plan. That waiting period precludes responding to market conditions in a timely manner. It compromises our goal of operating a family business.

Section 8 of House Bill 3226 increases stream buffer widths to such an extent that much of our land would be closed to good forest management. We have many non-fish streams and ephemeral streams that run water only in winters when we have substantial rainfall. It makes no sense to buffer streams to achieve temperature control when they run only in winter.

Section 9 of House Bill 3226 adds additional restrictions and regulations regarding forest roads, many requiring significantly higher costs including those of decommissioning existing roads when new ones are constructed. As small woodland owners, these costs are a hardship. Furthermore, we use our judgment in conjunction with the current Forest Practice Act regulations to determine how to maintain and construct roads on our property.

Section 11 of House Bill 3226 allows local government to adopt restrictions and regulations more restrictive than state law. We own forest properties in three counties. We work hard to understand and adhere to current regulations. Trying to work with three sets of regulations imposes considerable hardship and compromises all of our goals.

In addition to these concerns, we take exception to many of the statements in the “Where as” introductory portions of House Bill 3226. Many are opinions stated as fact. For example, they state that the changes they recommend to Oregon’s forest practices will create jobs through more labor-intensive forest practices. In our experience, those “labor-intensive” jobs are not ones anyone is willing to do on a sustained basis. Even if workers could be found, these labor-intensive practices would be cost-prohibitive and simply remain undone. Oregon’s timber industry would no longer be able to be competitive and our forests would be poorly managed. Other portions of the “Where as” statements are blatantly untruthful. For example, they state that the FPA has changed little in thirty years. We have participated in numerous hearings on changes, the most recent being the riparian rule changes that increased buffer widths on fish streams in western Oregon. We request that legislators read the introductory “where as” statements with a very critical eye.

We believe strongly that House Bill 3226 is bad public policy. It appears to be based on the doctrine of a particular interest group that wishes to shut down growing Oregon timber for commercial purposes. We agree that there needs to be a balance in our state among uses to which our resources are put, and we can accept the balance the current Forest Practice Act establishes. The proposed 28 pages of regulations House Bill 3226 would impose on private landowners is in no way balanced. We urge a NO vote on House Bill 3226.