AMERICAN FOREST RESOURCE COUNCIL

February 6, 2018

To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Re: Support for HB 4109

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee

I'm writing on behalf of the American Forest Resource Council (AFRC), an association of Pacific Northwest logging and milling operations advocating for the active management of Oregon's federally-owned forest lands.

**This letter is to express support for House Bill 4109, bipartisan legislation directing state agencies to pursue carbon sequestration opportunities and promote innovation in carbon sequestration technologies.**

**AFRC supports this legislation because it encourages a discussion on the role of active forest management on public lands in reducing carbon emissions. It also recognizes the ability of manufactured wood products to sequester carbon, and the potential of new technologies, such as Cross Laminated Timber, in helping the State of Oregon achieve environmental goals.**

We encourage the Oregon Legislature to promote active forest management, not only on state forests but especially on federally-owned forests, as a way to reduce carbon emissions from catastrophic wildfires. Emissions from a major forest fire can equal those from millions of cars driven in the state in a single year.

In addition to emitting large amounts of carbon dioxide, wildfires emit other greenhouse gasses and pollutants including methane and nitrous oxide that are harmful to public health and vulnerable populations such as the elderly.

Catastrophic wildfires are a serious public health and safety problem on our federally-owned lands, which make up 60 percent of Oregon's forested land base. Much of these forests are at high risk of catastrophic wildfire as fire suppression, combined with the lack of timber harvesting, has resulted in overgrown stands with smaller trees that are less resilient to wildfire.

As we witnessed during the last fire season, federal forests are burning and dying at a much higher rate compared to other forests. A recent study by the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station found that 56 percent of the growth on Oregon's national forests is lost to mortality, whether through fire, insects or disease, while only nine percent is lost through timber harvest or non-commercial treatments. By comparison the mortality rates on state and private forests are 19 percent and 12 percent of growth, even as timber is harvested on these lands at much higher rates.

Active forest management activities such as timber harvest, thinning and prescribed fire can help reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfire while enabling our forests to sequester more carbon. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Forest Service found that treatments on a Northern California watershed helped reduce high-severity fire by up to 75 percent while reducing carbon emissions

by as much as 77 percent. In examining data collected by the Forest Service on thinned and non-thinned forest stands, University of Montana researchers found that thinning treatments on younger stands contributed to the rapid growth of larger trees that can absorb more carbon.

Oregon's federally-owned forests need active forest management to reduce the risks of wildfire, insects and disease. Meanwhile, Oregon's timber industry needs a predictable supply of wood to manufacture lumber for construction and other products we use every day. Because wood is a by-product of active management that stores carbon, incredible opportunities exist for win-win solutions for our economy and environment.

AFRC's manufacturing members have the capacity to produce even more carbon-storing products, which would create more family wage jobs in our rural communities. In addition, new technologies such as Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) and biomass energy is opening new markets for smaller trees and lower-grade wood material that wouldn't otherwise be utilized for lumber. AFRC member companies are responsible for making Oregon the nation's top producer of softwood lumber. And our members are also investing in the development of advanced wood products to make their businesses more efficient.

For example, D.R. Johnson Wood Innovations of Riddle, a subsidiary of D.R. Johnson, specializes in the manufacture of CLT and glue-laminated beams from Douglas fir and Alaskan yellow cedar. Freres Lumber Co. of Lyons is pioneering the development of a veneer-based engineered wood product known as Mass Plywood Panel (MPP). MPP is currently being tested and refined through technical direction from the Tallwood Design Institute, a collaboration between Oregon State University Colleges of Forestry and Engineering and University of Oregon College of Architecture.

Oregon's modern forest products industry will continue to find new ways to utilize wood, our greatest and most abundant natural resource. But our companies and workers can't be successful without a reliable source of wood. In addition, our forests can't be healthy without active forest management that is urgently needed on our federal forest lands.

**House Bill 4109 will promote the development of environmentally-friendly, carbon-sequestering wood products that support family-wage jobs in rural Oregon. We encourage the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to support this bipartisan legislation, as well as support solutions at the federal level to promote active forest management on our federally-owned forest lands to reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfires, disease, insect infestation, drought, and health and safety risks to all Oregonians.**

Sincerely,
Nick Smith