

To: The Oregon House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use
Re: HB2225 pertaining to Forest Template Dwellings
Committee Hearing on February 5, 2019, 3PM, HR D

My name is McKenzie Bowerman. I own and manage several hundred acres of forestland in Lane and Douglas Counties. I am of the third generation of my family working on our forest home, and I am planning for my children to follow in this tradition.

I am here to share my experiences about the implementation of forest template dwelling law. I believe the law is currently being applied in a manner inconsistent to and more permissive than the legislature's original intent. Further, I believe this has a detrimental impact on working forestlands.

I was recently the petitioner in a land use case involving a neighboring forest tract that sought approval for three contiguous forest template dwellings. Prior to the dwelling applications, the property underwent a significant reconfiguration, including multiple property line adjustments, the discovery of historical and un-assessed lots, and re-naming of the same owner in different ways to get around the one template dwelling per tract standard. The property would not have qualified for the new dwellings in its original configuration.

I didn't pursue this case just because of "not in my back yard". Litigation was not my first choice. I was aware these highly nuanced template dwelling actions are a pattern and practice common in the State of Oregon and I felt a duty to step up for what I believe is right.

I think Oregonians are the great beneficiaries of wise land use planning. Just as industrial uses are not ideal in residential zones, new dwellings in forest zones pose similar incompatibilities. You can't grow trees and practice forestry on a 5 acre lot with a house, driveway, accessory structures and landscaping.

Furthermore, a buildable home site fetches a far greater price than a forest lot with limitations tailored to forest uses. If forest zones allow easy-to-get new dwellings and land divisions, then they will be priced according to market driven residential lot prices. This presents a valuation and pricing challenge for owners and would-be buyers of forest lands. I am concerned that forest practices are being replaced by more lucrative residential land division and development practices.

Forest and resource zones are a big part of what make Oregon special. They are a long term player in the economy, environmental health and natural beauty of Oregon, contributing to the livability of our home.

In conclusion, I have studied House Bill 2225, and I believe it is a reasonable approach to preserve our resource lands for future generations and uses. I ask you to join me in support of it.

Thank you.

McKenzie Bowerman