

February 14, 2019

Senator Michael Dembrow, Co-Chair

Representative Karin Power, Co-Chair

Members of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court St NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony in support of HB 2020 and for a voluntary carbon sequestration and storage program for forestland owners

My name is Bill Lenon. My wife and I, both retired, own about ten acres of wooded forest land near Eagle Creek in Clackamas County. As small forest owners we are deeply committed to improving and maintaining our forest's and our watershed's health.

We are generally in support of HB 2020, particularly sections 7, 31, and 68. However, I want to make the committee aware that a newly proposed bill, HB 2152, runs directly counter to efforts of this committee to alleviate global warming by sequestering and storing carbon through the use of Oregon's private forestlands. The original intent of earlier special assessment legislation as applied to forestlands for many decades was to sustainably provide for timber developing special tax assessments and removing the ad valorem tax for growing timber to benefit Oregon private forestland owners and its citizens. HB 2152 does exactly the reverse by removing special tax assessments and adding an ad valorem tax on standing timber.

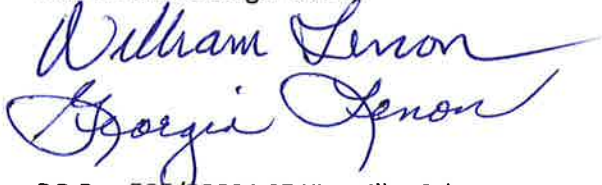
Many owners of small woodlots are, as my wife and I are, "mom and pop" operations. Also, we, and many that we have spoken to, have no intention of ever again harvesting. The enormous increase in property tax would be, by our estimate, around 45 times the current rate and thus several thousand dollars annually. Additionally, we have no idea of the annual amount of the ad valorem tax. All this would certainly place an onerous financial burden on most small woodlot owners. Many owners, finding themselves heavily taxed for maintaining environmentally healthy forests for the long term, would instead be forced to harvest as soon as possible, sub-divide, or break up viable forestland for other non-forest purposes. Unless the health of the forest demands some thinning we, and others, would prefer to simply maintain and pass on our forests. But, if HB 2152 passes unmodified, woodlot owners would be radically de-incentivized to keep even marginally mature trees with the carbon they hold. Indeed, this may force nearly all timber owners who grow for personal financial needs or retirement income, to harvest prematurely, vitiating the effects of carbon sequestration and long-term storage. Small, and

large, woodland owners deserve fair treatment for helping to sequester and store carbon, among other benefits to the environment , not increased taxes.

We support you in your efforts to help Oregon and the world by reducing carbon. We also urge you to ensure small woodland owner's help in achieving the goals of HB 2020 by retaining sections 7, 31, and 68 of this bill and by advising that sections 56, 57, 58, 59, 60 and 61 of HB 2152 be removed from that bill. Riparian and wildlife conservation, clean energy, carbon sequestration and the general health of Oregon's forestlands depend on your efforts. We have an obligation to our children and their future that we must ensure we keep.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

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