

Jill Bell <jill\_smouse@hotmail.com>

House Energy and Environment Committee:

I am extremely concerned over HB 2656 and wanted to take the time to submit my concerns to your committee. I am a forest engineering specialist with over 15 years of experience working in Oregon's timber industry. My experience gives me first hand knowledge and experience as to how private forests are actually managed. It appears to me the people who have brought forward this house bill do not understand current forest practices within our state or the actual results we are seeing from properly managed private forest lands.

Oregon's private forests are currently managed under the Oregon Forest Practices Act, which is well respected throughout the United States as an effective, science based set of rules and regulations. I think this can be seen by the fact that the DEQ has data confirming the best water quality in Oregon comes from our forested watersheds, including those with active management. I can personally attest to the fact that water quality is one of the key factors taken into consideration before any road construction, harvest operation, or pesticide application begins.

HB 2656 would override the Oregon Forest Practices Act, enacting more restrictions on our private forests than California's. As we are all aware, California is experiencing the worst fire conditions in the state's history and they are currently looking for ways to increase their harvest levels to decrease fire risk. I don't want our state to end up in the same conditions. In addition, the potential for increased fires seems to be at odds with the concerns the state has for carbon reduction and greenhouse gas emissions as we have heard from the Joint Committee On Carbon Reduction with HB 2020.

I want Oregon to continue to have productive forests that provide for water quality, clean air, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, recreation opportunities, and jobs to thousands of Oregonians. I want Oregon to continue to be the number one softwood lumber producer in the country. I want Oregon to continue to have healthy forests that are not over stocked, diseased, inaccessible, and a fire risk to our state. I want the committee to know that the managers of private forest lands today are continuing to improve our ownerships to make our water quality better than it has been in the past. I have personally been involved in projects that upgraded legacy road systems by adding cross drains, improving road surfacing, and upgrading stream crossings to make them fish passable. We continue to use the most advanced and sustainable logging practices that minimize ground disturbance and environmental impacts. I can also personally attest to the fact that we are increasing and improving Oregon's forests by planting areas that were previously non-forested or only growing brush. The forest land managers within our state are true stewards of the land and are improving the quality of our forests.

I am truly concerned that this house bill has been brought forward by people who do not understand how private forest land is currently being managed, or that we have laws

and regulations in place that govern our forest activities. It concerns me that we could end up with a law based on a lack of understanding, compounded by misinformation presented by the media. There is no science based evidence showing a problem exists that would require the changes brought forward in this bill. HB 2656 does not make sense for Oregon. I am in strong opposition of HB 2656.

Jill A. Bell  
40005 SE Kitzmiller Rd.  
Eagle Creek, OR 97022  
541-740-4807 