

Jacob Hilger <jhilger@stimsonlumber.com>

Members of the House Committee on Environment and Energy

My name is Jacob Hilger and I thank you for the opportunity to speak on the effects of house bill 2656

I live and work in Tillamook County and the impacts of this bill will directly impact the way of life for myself, my family, and my community. These forests and their waters are very dear to me. They are where I live. They are where I cut the wood to heat my home, they are where I fish and hunt to feed my family, they are where I first courted my wife and won her heart. They are where for the last 6 years I have made my living as a professional forester. Nearly every day of my life since I've come to Tillamook I'm in these forests and watersheds and I provide stewardship for these lands. My wife and I drink the water from these watersheds and we hope to raise a family here who will drink from these watersheds. There is not a doubt in my mind about the safety and quality of the water and health of these actively managed forests because the laws governing them are based on scientific peer reviewed studies and they work. By drinking the water I am betting my life on it, and my family's life on it. I, as a forester would never operate in a way which would jeopardize the quality these watersheds because not only do the laws of the Oregon Forests Practices Act prevent it, but my livelihood depends on it.

I manage forestland that is part of 8 community water systems as well as hundreds of small domestic systems over 80,000 acres. I know and speak with the community water system managers on a regular basis when I'm operating in their watersheds. We discuss concerns, visit the sites, and we make plans to successfully operate to meet both our goals. This method of cooperation has worked successfully for me for the last 6 years and has worked even longer for my predecessors. Recently I worked with Netarts Water District and Oregon DEQ to successfully do a herbicide application in Netarts Watershed. By implementing Best Management Practices and good communication we were able to reach our goal of 0 herbicide detections. This was confirmed by DEQ who took water samples during and after the application and after the first rain event.

There is no scientific evidence to suggest that watershed quality and active forest management under the forest practices act is mutually exclusive. Recent study by Oregon DEQ found that the best water in the state comes from forested watersheds including those actively managed. The economic impacts to small communities like mine would be devastating if HB 2656 passes for it will effectively extinguish my ability to actively manage the forestland that I care for. For these reasons I am opposed to HB 2656 and I hope you will as well.

Thank you.

-Jake

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