

HB 2656 Hearing – Tuesday, March 12, 2019
Harold T. Nygren - Statement in Opposition

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Good Afternoon, Chairman Helm and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to share with your my concerns about House Bill 2656.

My wife and I own 260 acres of forestland in Washington and Douglas Counties. We live on one of the parcels, and manage all three for a variety of forest benefits - timber, wildlife, water. We practice good scientifically sound forest management that complies with the Oregon Forest Practices Act. We rely on our forestland to supplement our income and provide a nest egg for the future. We are very concerned that both our present and future livelihood is in jeopardy!

The premise of this bill - that water quality will increase - is not supported by science. The best water quality in the state comes from our forestlands, and scientific study has shown there is no significant difference in water quality downstream from forests with active forest management, and those without active forest management.

The HB 2656 restrictions on sound and science-based forest management will not improve water quality, but they will have significant negative effects on the livelihood of small woodland owner. The effects would extend beyond just the woodland owners, but also affect communities.

- Forests will be more prone to wildfire due to lack of active management – with attendant negative effects of water quality from large, difficult to control fires.
- Family forestlands will be more difficult to retain as forest, resulting in land conversions, as family owners lose their ability to use proven silvicultural methods.
- Local wood production, job producing mills will find it much more difficult to sustain their economic viability.
- Opportunities to provide certain kinds of wildlife habitat will be much more difficult to create with HB 2656 restrictions on silvicultural methods.

I urge you not to pass this bill. It is anti-forestry and anti-small woodland owner. There are 3.6 million acres of small woodlands in Oregon - 37% of Oregon's private forests. This bill would impact a majority of these forests by removing sound silvicultural tools for managing them. It would not have any significant positive effect on water quality, contrary to its stated purpose. However, it would result in increased fire hazard, loss of resources that could benefit communities, and reduced incentive to maintain our working forests.