

Mark Garrigues <Mark.Garrigues@gwrglobal.com>

Dear Representative Helm,
Please oppose HB 2656!

I am a constituent from District 32 living and working in Clatsop County. I work for GreenWood Resources, an international timber management company based in Portland, but managing property in Clatsop, Tillamook, Yamhill, and Lincoln Counties in Oregon as well as Pacific, Wahkiakum, and Lewis Counties in Washington. GreenWood is headquartered in Portland and was founded with the mission of treating the earth's most renewable resources – trees- through sustainable and ethical practices. Our employees and their families live in the communities in which they work, and we share the author's concern about high quality drinking water; however, we believe HB 2656 would significantly impair the ability of private landowners to actively manage their forests.

GreenWood manages over 163,000 acres of timberland in the state of Oregon and has managed resources in the state for close to 20 years. We have always maintained a strong commitment to operating with the highest environmental standards and forestry management practices and are committed to certification from third party organizations like Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). All are in accordance with the standards laid out in the Oregon Forest Practices Act. In fact, the Department of Environmental Quality's own data confirms that the best water quality in Oregon comes from forested watersheds, including those with active management such as the ones operated by GreenWood.

HB 2656 is extreme legislation that would ban active management of forestland on over a million acres in some of Oregon's most productive forestland by prohibiting harvest, road building, and application of pesticides and fertilizer in forests that serve as public drinking water sources. The bill claims these restrictions are necessary to protect water quality, which is completely false.

Oregon's forests are currently managed under some of the strictest environmental regulations in the nation, much of which is explicitly protective of water quality. Maintaining the productive use of private forests is critical to the economic and social stability of many Oregon counties and communities. Private forests sustainably produce 78% of Oregon's timber harvest, support over 100 manufacturers, and employ more than 60,000 Oregonians in family-wage jobs.

HB 2656 would remove Oregon from its position as the number one softwood lumber and plywood producer in the country, risking the shuttering of mills and the loss of thousands of family wage jobs in already vulnerable rural communities.

All HB 2656 does is force private forests into the same non-management as federal forests, where overstocked, diseased and inaccessible landscapes have generated 80 percent of acres lost to fire over the past decade. Carbon emissions from wildfire smoke emit millions of metric tons of air pollution, are costly to rural economies, and negatively impact Oregonians' health.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in opposition to HB 2656.

Sincerely,
Mark Garrigues