

Testimony in Opposition of HB 2656

I am a concerned Linn County citizen that strongly opposes HB 2656. My wife and I own a small tree farm outside of Lebanon, Oregon.

I am a certified Forester for a small private timber company in Western Oregon. Our company prides itself in the sustainable management of our beautiful forests and the protection of our drinking water.

Douglas-fir Succession

Prior to western settlement, the native Douglas-fir forests were managed by the use of frequent fires initiated by local Native American Indians and lightning. Douglas-fir is sun loving and is not a shade tolerant species. Today, clearcuts provide the framework by which people can benefit through the harvest of sustainable resources while delivering the optimal conditions for a new stand to regenerate. Approximately 4 seedlings are replanted for every merchantable tree that is harvested. This equates to about 450 trees per acre.

Why not just thin? Thinning in the immediate future is certainly an option on the table. But then what does an educated person do after the thinning? Interplanting Douglas-fir certainly will not work due to lack of sunlight, water and nutrients. Managing long term and understanding the succession of our state tree is vital to being good stewards of the land. Clearcutting is the best viable tool that benefits our forests.

Oregon Forest Practices Act

The Oregon Forest Practices Act is sufficient in protecting water. The rules set forth are grounded in science that is continually being reviewed by universities, agencies, and resource professionals.

On Monday, I had an intern ask me regarding HB 2656, "since Oregon is the largest producer of plywood and dimensional lumber, where is the wood going to come from?" I answered, "those in favor of HB 2656 believe that life is great as long as its not in my backyard." The demand for wood will remain, but the resources will come from other parts of the globe that have little to no regulation. As a 2nd generation forester, I pride myself in using best management activities to benefit our forests, including air, water, and wildlife.

Impact economically

According to Oregon Forest Resources Institute, there are 61,051 jobs directly connected to the forest products industry. This does not include jobs such as mechanics, tire shops, service industries, accountants, and the list goes on! Diminished tax revenue for the state will certainly be felt and I can say with confidence that HB 2656 will kill Oregon's economy. If passed, I foresee a mass exodus of working families, locating themselves to states that provide for a future livelihood.

Fire Impacts

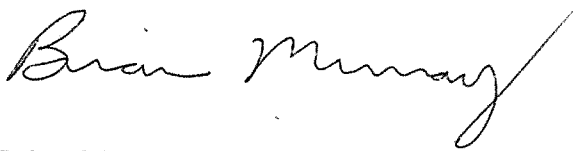
Our recent fire seasons have stirred a lot of conversation. There has been approximately a 50/50 split on fire starts on government lands and private lands (lightning and human caused). Of the acres burned, 80% was on federal property. Fire has no bounds. Fire burns clear to the streams. Soils in the riparian area are highly susceptible to erosion and sedimentation into our streams and rivers. Where fire is intense, soils can become hydrophobic and the erosion process can be exasperated.

A large reason for the amount of acreage burned on our federal forests is due in part by not clearcutting. Having large openings for fire breaks can prove beneficial to the suppression efforts. Another reason is the closure of roads and the limits set on constructing new ones.

Conclusion

I ask that you consider my concerns carefully and that you oppose HB 2656. Thank you for your time.

Please Vote to OPPOSE House Bill 2656

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Murray". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Brian Murray

Certified Forester, Society of American Foresters