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HB 2656, the Safe Waters Act is Oregon's best opportunity to prepare for climate change and halt the unconscionable threat to our drinking water supplies. HB 2656 will prohibit clearcut logging and new forest roads, reducing sediment and thermal pollution into our streams that provide drinking water.

The Safe Waters Act will protect the drinking water of tens of thousands of Oregonians, particularly those living in coastal Oregon, from the harmful effects of industrial forest practices. There is sufficient evidence that industrial forest practices are harming drinking water supplies. Rockaway Beach, Arch Cape, Siletz, Salem, Corbett, and Triangle Lake are just a few examples of communities that have been impacted. Rockaway Beach was forced to upgrade their treatment plant at a cost of \$1.6 million to ensure their water is safe to drink. Salem will spend over \$15 million to upgrade its treatment plant to protect their drinking water from harmful algal blooms.

HB 2656 addresses fundamental weaknesses in the current Forest Practices Act that increase risk to water supplies: clearcut logging, the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, and the massive forest road network, which is a chronic source of sediment pollution to streams.

2656 will prohibit Type III Harvest Units— the 120-acre clearcuts, with exceptions for ecological purposes like promoting early seral habitats. It will ban the use of pesticides. And it will require landowners to identify problem roads and fix or remove them. Eliminating these practices will result in greater forest health, reduced treatment costs, and a cleaner, safer finished product. It will also benefit fish and wildlife.

Climate change will exacerbate the problems of industrial forestry increasing sediment pollution and creating conditions for harmful algal blooms like those that affected Salem's water supply last year.

Tree plantations have been shown to reduce stream flow in the summer by up to 50%, which when coupled with the effects of climate change, could threaten the water supplies of many communities.

Some foresters in Oregon, like Zena Forest Products, already manage their lands in a way that would meet the requirements of the Safe Waters Act. This proves that sustainable forestry is profitable!

Also, many of the larger companies operating in Oregon, also harvest trees in Washington, Idaho and California under stricter requirements and do so profitably.

Recent reporting has shed light on the influence the timber industry has on individual legislators and the Department of Environmental Quality, including forcing DEQ to shelve a report linking industrial forest management to water quality problems affecting coastal communities. The Energy and Environment Committee has the opportunity to change this narrative and restore faith with Oregonians that the water they drink is safe.

We urge you to move this bill into a work session so that additional information can be considered, including from the Department of Environmental Quality, so that the final contours of this bill can be developed.

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