

House Committee on Energy and Environment

Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 2656 – March 12, 2019

My name is Joe Nelson, I am a professional Forester at Cascade Timber Consulting, Inc., in Sweet Home, OR and I oppose HB 2656. I help manage 145,000 acres of forest resources, spanning from the valley floor, to the crest of the Cascade Mountain Range. I have worked in the timber industry for 8 years as a professional forester, inventory manger, and wildland firefighter. I have a Bachelor's degree from Oregon State University, college of forestry, in Forest Management. Oregon State has one of the top forestry programs in not only the nation, but the world. Oregon is known globally for its highly productive forest, specifically Douglas fir forest, west of the Cascade Range. Oregon is renowned globally for its stewardship and laws/regulations that help protect these forest resources. While attending Oregon State, students are required to take classes ranging from watershed management, silviculture, bio-diversity, and many others. Students graduating from the field must be extremely well versed in every aspect of Forest Management. If you wish to view the scholastic requirements of a forestry graduate from Oregon State, here is a link to view the learning outcomes of the degree and required courses: <https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/undergraduate-programs/forestry-forest-management-learning-outcomes>

https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/upload_files/FOR%20Mgmt%2018%2019%20Four%20Year%20Plan%20Landscape.pdf

I had the privilege to sit in on the March 12th hearing with the House Committee on Energy and Environment. I listened to testimonies from both in agreeance and opposition for the bill. During this hearing, there seemed to be many people gravely mis-informed about current Oregon Forest Practices Act rules/regulations and how basic forest ecology works. Listed below are only a few of the reason why HB 2656 is the wrong choice for Oregon.

HB 2656 is detrimental to Oregon in so many ways. The economic repercussions of this bill extend far beyond the scope of the timber industry. So many rural communities in Oregon have suffered since the major decline of our industry in the mid 90's. This bill would not only amplify those same hardships but permanently cripple rural Oregon. In Linn County alone the timber sector attributes to almost 7% of all county employment, not including other companies that work with/support the timber industry, such as mechanics, equipment companies, tire/machine shops, mills, etc. HB 2656 would decimate rural economies by pushing private timber owners, logging contractors, road construction companies, and manufacturing facilities elsewhere. This in turn would have a cascading effect throughout all of Oregon's rural areas, even reaching well into the urban population centers. You must realize this bill comes with extremely harmful ramifications that Oregon would simply not recover from.

https://knowyourforest.org/sites/default/files/documents/OFRI_LinnCounty_DIGITAL.pdf

HB 2656 is not backed by scientific data and questions the current OFPA regulations currently in place today. This bill chooses to ignore current data published by the DEQ, stating that domestic water that flows through forested watersheds is the cleanest drinking water in the state, as you can see in the figure below, provided by DEQ 2018 water year study. Listening to some of the testimonies for the bill,

many are baseless claims that provide no data or support to their argument, beyond emotions and opinion. I urge the committee to look at the scientific data that proves the current regulations of the OFPA is not only working but exceeding EPA requirements.

How does land use influence status?

Land use type is determined based on the dominant land use in a five-mile buffer upstream of the monitoring site. The mixed land use type was assigned when none of the other four land use designations made up more than 50 percent of the five-mile buffer.

The forest land use type continues to have the highest percentage of excellent and good status sites, while the urban and agriculture land use types have the highest percentage of sites in fair to very poor status. While more than 50% of the sites in both the range and mixed land use types are in fair to very poor status, both have a considerable proportion of sites in good status

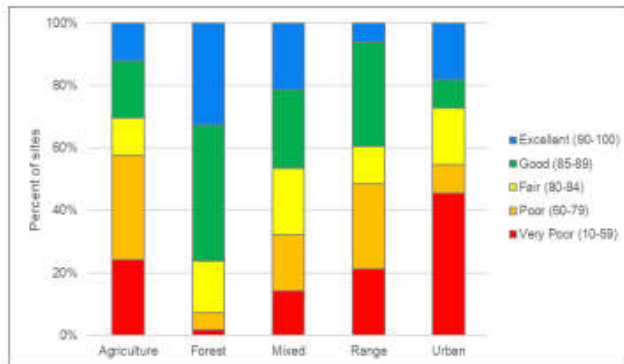


Figure 3. Influence of land use on water quality.

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/WQI2018DataSummary.pdf>

Water Quality by Basin:

Listed below are water quality table by basin, notice the land type and status. Forestry far surpasses every other land use type in every basin.

- Sandy, Columbia, Willamette Basin (**Includes Sanitam Watershed and McKenzie Watersheds**)

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/wqmWillametteColSan.pdf>

- North/Mid Cost Basin

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/wqmMidNoCo.pdf>

- Rouge and South Cost Basin

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/wqmUmpRogSC.pdf>

HB 2656 prevents private land owners from managing their forests effectively. By eliminating type 3 timber harvest, landowners cannot effectively and sustainably harvest timber, prevent catastrophic wildfires, or prevent disease/fuel loading in these forests. Type 3 timber harvest and road construction are essential for a healthy and productive forest. The use of herbicide/pesticide is used in a safe manner that is enforced by the Oregon Dept of Agriculture and Oregon Dept of Forestry. These are tools that we use to enhance, protect, and sustain our forest ecosystems.

As a professional forester, I can see the great harm HB 2656 will do to not only the timber industry, but all of Oregon. The bill is not backed by science and is an attack on the timber industry. This bill will not only negatively affect private land owners, but all of Oregon. I urge the committee to oppose HB 2656.

Please Vote to OPPOSE House Bill 2656.

Thank You,

Joe Nelson

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