

Connie Atkinson <mac3853@gmail.com>

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RE: HB 2656

Dear Representative Helm:

Regarding House Bill 2656 - the science needs to be followed.

Oregon has been the leader in sustainable, accountable forestry, which has been governed by Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), giving new guidelines moving forward through the decades. Is it perfect, no, however, I doubt anything is actually perfect. Audits are performed by Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), PricewaterhouseCoopers, a third party auditor for American Tree Farm System (ATFS) which certifies forest landowners in Oregon through Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc. and throughout the country. Oregon forest landowners, have audits just about every year, from the above mentioned programs, which is one way of keeping up with Standards of Sustainability, protection of wildlife, historical sites, water, harvest, planting, and the laws. Oregon's audit is every five years coinciding with the Standards of Sustainability. If there are serious infractions, Oregon may be removed from participating, however, there have never been any since the first tree farm was certified in 1942, (this landowner has since sold the property, no longer certified) and 1944 still certified through Oregon Tree Farm System, Inc.

The fact is, trees provide many benefits, and are used in more products than one can imagine. Trees are like people, have a life span, and then begin to fade with age. The ideal time to harvest is before that happens. Re-plant and begin the beauty again.

I love the trees! They are sustainable, beautiful, and provide me many benefits, outside of just being beautiful. I respect them as living things, and do what I can to promote their health. However, I don't have the science, or education, to know what is best for them, the soils, or the land. I leave that to the professionals, and do research on what I am told, in essence I follow the science.

I ask, please follow the science, the audits, and ODF to protect forest owners from losing their forest rights by house bills that hamper them from accomplishing that.

Please follow the science.

Thank-you for your time.

Regards,

Connie Atkinson

Oregon

