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"Representing the logging industry since 1969"

March 21, 2019

The Honorable Ken Helm
Oregon House of Representatives
State Capitol; Salem, OR 97310

Email: hee.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Subject: OPPOSE HB. 2656

Dear Representative Helm:

I am writing to urge your unequivocal opposition to HB 2656; and we urge your leadership to end the bill's track within the Committee for Energy & Environment.

Please accept these comments on behalf of Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL), representing over 1,000 member logging and allied forest management businesses working across Oregon – most of which are small-business independent contractors. Some of our members also own and manage their own private forestland property themselves. All of AOL member companies work under an effective cooperative stewardship atmosphere where landowner and contractor businesses alike have demonstrated a 96% willing compliance rate with the Forest Practices Act (FPA) statewide.

HB 2656 would wrongly ban, without scientific evidence that it would improve water quality, many proven scientific methods prescribed by Oregon forest professionals to sustainably manage working forests. Across swaths of private and public forestland, the bill would wantonly dictate damaging prohibitions, including:

- No regeneration harvest and reforestation, a proven silvicultural method for successfully growing diverse forests comprised of native Oregon sun-loving conifer tree species
- No forest access road improvements or construction necessary to manage, protect and recreate
- No use of modern scientific technologies for tending forest diversity and productivity
- No time-proven management practices for continuous forest ecosystem improvement

HB 2656 would have a costly impact on all forest management—but be especially damaging to small forest landowners and contract operations. HB 2656 would severely stifle professional management to grow and harvest trees, as a valuable contribution to Oregon's rural economy. This anti-forestry bill would needlessly obstruct the 10.2 million acres of private forestlands—the vital 34% of Oregon forests that now produce 78% of the forest sector's total harvest volume.

HB 2656 is an unworkable bill that would overturn Oregon's 47-year landmark Forest Practices Act. The bill would impact the growing and harvesting of Oregon's productive private forestlands—thereby creating unacceptable declines in the economic, social and environmental advantages of the forest sector: an Oregon top-3 traded good economic sector. HB 2656 would scrap effective forest laws; unnecessarily replacing them with emotionally-driven mandates that contradict good science.

Thank you for your consideration to respect the proven and science-grounded forest methods prescribed by contemporary Oregon forest professionals.

Sincerely,

Rex Storm, Certified Forester
Forest Policy Manager; Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.
