

Rep. Helm and Committee members,

My name is Travis Cameron. I am the Owner/Operator of Sky-Em Timber CO. We are based out of Lane County where I grew up and currently reside. I started logging shortly after my 18th birthday, and save for a stint in the United States Marine Corps., I have worked in the woods all my adult life. I was able to strike out on my own in 2011 in one of the most difficult industries in the Pacific Northwest. I love what I do, and the interaction with the people is what makes it worthwhile.

My company specializes in working with small woodlot owners in my community and across the county. Our projects are typically small, 1-10 acres and family owned. Our company works well within the forest practices set by the state, which are some of the most robust forest regulations in the world. We understand that the actions we take today will have an impact on the generations to come. The timber industry, the State and land owners have taken it upon themselves to regulate activity and harvesting to get us where we are today. We have the air, soil and water quality to prove it. Written plans are submitted and documented before the start of every project, and we work hand in hand with timber owners and the Oregon Department of Forestry to ensure water quality is not adversely affected.

The following is a compilation of the kind of interactions that we get to be involved in every year. I included these and hope that the committee that is handling HB 2656 will put themselves in the place of these families in my community, knowing that this bill would have an adverse effect on them. These are not large corporations, but everyday people who have worked hard to make do with what they have.

We performed a project for a landowner last year on a farm that was purchased in the early 1990's. This was a long term investment that the couple had a vision for. They scraped together what savings they had and borrowed the rest to purchase the farm so it did not fall out of family hands. They put countless months out of every year into the land and the timber that grew on it. 30 years later, with the timber that was harvested they were able to fund two grand kids

college educations. No grant money or loans were needed. That parcel has been replanted and is on its way to the next generation in that family.

A woman in our community had recently lost her husband of over 30 years and was left with medical bills that exceeded what her fixed income would cover. She owned a small parcel of land that had a healthy stand of timber on it. We were able to ethically harvest enough timber to cover the costs that she owed. No deferral's to the hospital, no bankruptcy and no loans needed.

No government grants, personal loans, bankruptcies or other borrowed funds were needed for the above mentioned projects. All were performed under our current model of sustainable forestry in Oregon. None of these families would be allowed to harvest timber under House Bill 2656 because it would make the process financially impossible. My company that has taken years to get to its current state would not be in business, as House Bill 2656 would eliminate 70% of our gross revenue. The two current sponsors of 2656 are representatives from Lake Oswego and Milwaukie. Two metro areas that are far removed from the rural families I have spoken of today. There is no science or common sense in House Bill 2656, only more senseless regulation and hardships for those that are working honestly and providing for themselves.

Innovation would suffer under HB 2656. Oregon State University is world renowned for their forestry programs. This bill would drastically curtail logging activities on private forests, and with that, the foresters and administrative jobs that go with that. In turn, if there are no jobs available in this sector, how many students do you think will pursue a career in Forestry? We absolutely must have a timber industry to attract young people into the complex task of managing our forests. Decades of research and methods that have been studied and put into application would halt due to the lack of positions and funding that would be available. The timber industry is uniquely self-sufficient; we do not receive government subsidies like farming and agriculture. We make do with the available resources we have. We are extremely resilient, but HB 2656 would blanket that ability in more government bureaucracy.

If HB 2656 was purely about clean water, it would not be a complicated matter to resolve between all parties involved. The Oregon State Forest Practice act cites preserving water quality literally hundreds of times. This bill is solely about dramatically curtailing logging and private owners who own timber. Under current zoning laws (in my county) this would make reserved forestland basically worthless monetarily. How are private owners to be compensated for that? And the truth is they won't. They will be told that it is another hardship they will have to endure.

I love my State, our forests and our rivers. I have a deep seeded commitment to being a steward for those things. I understand that it is my colleague's and myself that are responsible for ethical management and harvesting of timber in our forests. The Oregon Department of Forestry trusts and allows us to perform these difficult operations. Politicians from large metro areas several counties away do not represent us and what we stand for, and neither does House Bill 2656.

*I cordially invite the Chairman and any committee members to come view current and future projects our company has scheduled. I will answer any questions and fit my schedule to accommodate your engagements. I can be reached on the number below from 6Am to 11PM, 7 days a week.

Respectfully,

Travis Cameron

Sky-Em Timber CO.

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