

Date: 3/22/19

Rep. Bill Witt

900 Court St NE, H-374

Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 2659 Opposition


Dear Representative Witt:

We are writing this letter in opposition of House Bill 2659 and understand you are the chairperson of the committee considering this Bill. We would like you and the committee to consider the flowing items before supporting the Bill.

1. We are small forestland owners and have 100 acres on Eagle Creek in Clackamas county known as "Eagle Creek Forest". We use the Small Tract Forestland special assessment option. The Bill referenced above will increase our taxes significantly if not astronomically.
2. Oregon is and has been a "Timber" State since the first pioneers arrived here, it is part of our history and heritage and always will be. This Bill does not support the Timber families of Oregon.
3. Why are we (Oregon) now defining what a Forest is? It appears this Bill is being utilized to raise taxes on the small forestland owners without considering the total impacts to both large and small forestland owners. This will not encourage the processing of forest products in Oregon. It will raise to cost of the products though. Small forestland owners deal with many uncontrollable variables weather, fire, insects, market conditions etc. which are detrimental to our forest. This Bill seems to just add more variables and cost to the small forestland owners which takes decades of hard work to hopefully realize a fruitful harvest.
4. This Bill appears to tax the small forestland owners on future potential income that may or may not be received for decades.
5. How can forest land owners determine the impacts of Bill 2659 until after the State Forester and County assessors have collaborated, developed and agreed on the systems that defines Forestland? We have been collaborating with the State Forester and our accessor since we started.
6. Other concerns: Development concerns, Land use concerns, Legislative consistency concerns, Estate planning concerns, Environmental concerns, Fire concerns and Retirement concerns.
7. We and other forestland owners have invested time, money and blood sweat and tears into our Forest over the years based on the laws established by the state decades ago and feel as though the rules are changing for the worst and not the better for Oregonians.

In summary we strongly feel HB 2659 in its current state has not been thoroughly reviewed, thought out nor has it considered the serious impacts on the timber community or on Oregon's environment.

Sincerely



Mike Johnson
The Johnson Family
Eagle Creek Forest
27055 Eagle Fern rd.
Eagle Creek, Or. 97022

CC: Representative Anna William
Senator Chuck Thomsen