

March 26, 2019

Chair Witt,  
Vice Chairs Gorsek & Sprenger, and  
Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources

For the record, I am Susan Morgan, Natural Resources Policy Manager for the Association of Oregon Counties.

AOC opposes HB 2659.

For Oregon's rural counties, the strength of our economies and our social fabric are linked to the vibrancy of our employment base. Jobs in the forest products sector are some of our best jobs. They combine high wages with full benefits. It is important for rural counties to protect these valuable jobs.

Below is a comparison of average wages paid in three land management related job sectors: forestry and logging, wood products manufacturing, and trucking. These are jobs that pay close to the state-wide average wage, and often pay substantially above the average wage of rural counties. For comparison, jobs in leisure and hospitality (the tourism industry), pay about half the annual wage of forest related jobs, and rank substantially below the county's average wage.

Right now, our working private forest lands supply clean water, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and jobs. More than three quarters of Oregon's timber harvest comes from privately owned land. That harvest supplies logs to more than 100 mills in Oregon and sustains family wage jobs for more than 60,000 Oregonians.

To crash a bright spot in rural Oregon economies, and weaken the social fabric of our communities, by forcing timberland owners to drastically alter the age classes of their timber (if it can be accomplished at all) by July 1, 2020 or lose their tax deferral is bad public policy.

County Commissioners urge you not to move this bill to change the regulations around the management of our private forest lands. The social and economic price that will be paid by rural Oregon families is to great.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Sincerely,

Susan Morgan  
Natural Resources Policy  
Association of Oregon Counties

Annual Average Wage 2017					
	Total Private Sector Average	Forestry & Logging Average	Wood Products Manufacturing Average	Truck Transportation Average	Leisure & Hospitality Average
Oregon	\$50,483	\$51,264	\$49,430	\$50,890	\$21,379
Benton	\$46,454	\$54,120	\$62,503	\$35,749	\$16,824
Clackamas	\$51,918	\$51,310	\$46,391	\$51,091	\$20,215
Clatsop	\$35,757	\$52,951	\$60,817	\$47,233	\$21,691
Columbia	\$37,332	\$52,343	\$44,004	\$58,989	\$16,659
Curry	\$31,879	\$42,571	\$51,037	\$47,258	\$17,190
Douglas	\$38,140	\$45,473	\$51,030	\$47,962	\$16,818
Jackson	\$40,206	\$44,918	\$47,523	\$49,476	\$19,326
Josephine	\$34,750	\$59,697	\$39,295	\$36,329	\$18,102
Klamath	\$36,104	\$44,965	\$51,727	\$38,646	\$17,529
Lane	\$41,025	\$50,850	\$54,795	\$52,384	\$17,679
Lincoln	\$33,756	\$50,080	\$51,740	\$44,270	\$21,674
Linn	\$41,536	\$47,923	\$52,476	\$55,719	\$16,914
Polk	\$33,433	\$51,326	\$69,040	\$42,996	\$15,646
Tillamook	\$36,737	\$50,680	\$52,918	\$43,572	\$20,445
Washington	\$69,389	\$48,615	\$51,248	\$46,767	\$20,638
Yamhill	\$39,468	\$49,793	\$52,292	\$44,162	\$19,402

Data - State of Oregon Employment Department - Employment and Wages by Industry