

Watts Remy

From: Lars Filson <gravityfilson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2019 11:51 PM
To: SENR Exhibits
Cc: Sen Golden; Rep Wilson
Subject: The argument against SB 931 and SB 926

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee,

I began my college career studying wild land fire fuel management at Central Oregon Community College in 2016, before transferring to the University of Idaho this spring to finish my Bachelor degree in wildfire ecology and management, with a minor in forest resources. While I currently reside in Idaho, I was raised in Oregon and have a vested interest in the current forest management policy impacting forest lands across the state.

As an aspiring fire management officer, I fully support Bill SB 931 and the public's need to be informed on current forest management actions taking place.

Based on my experience as a wild land firefighter and my education, I cannot in good conscience support bill SB 926- Forestry Pesticide Project. While herbicide application is used in forest management, in many situations the cost and associated risk are prohibitive, which prevents herbicide use on a large scale. When herbicides are applied in forest management, it is often in a dire situation that requires great lengths or costs to maintain the quality of the ecosystem. An excellent example of this in Oregon is post severe wildfire. Increasingly often in Oregon we are losing timber stands to brush fields after wildfires, which decreases the monetary and aesthetic value of the area and creates future challenges in suppressing wildfires that occur in the area. Without the application of herbicides as a brush suppressant, it can take upwards of 500 years for timber to successfully reestablish and outcompete the shrub component. I personally had the experience of fighting fire in areas that have previously burned around 16 years ago and had reestablished as a shrub field that was nearly double overhead in places while I was assigned to the Klondike fire this summer.

In an era of rapidly changing forest management needs, we must allow foresters and fire managers alike access to every possible tool that can be used to successfully meet forest management objectives. The barring of herbicide use in forest management could have lengthy consequences, including further decreasing the ability for foresters to successfully maintain Oregon's wildest lands. The public must learn to trust in foresters and understand that their education, experience, and professionalism will allow them to make choices on behalf of the public that are the most likely to meet the needs of the greatest number of people. After all, forest management is about doing the greatest good, for the greatest number.

I hope you very seriously consider what I have said before you make your vote.

Thank you
Lars Filson