



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry

State Forester's Office

2600 State Street

Salem, OR 97310

503-945-7200

FAX 503-945-7212

TTY 503-945-7213 / 800-437-4490

<http://www.odf.state.or.us>

April 4, 2019

Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources
State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301



Re: House Bill 3025 – Relating to carbon sequestration.

Dear Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the consideration of the role that Oregon's forests play in carbon sequestration. After growth, harvest, and mortality, Oregon's forests sequester approximately 30.9 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents annually. The Department of Forestry (ODF) has no position on the bill and provides the following for consideration as the committee discusses House Bill 3025.

In Oregon, forests have exists where they are today for a variety of reasons. Thanks to Oregon's statewide land use system, 98 percent of the state's forests that existed in 1974 are still forestland today. Tree species that are common in Oregon's forests may not be suitable planting candidates for areas not currently forested. Over the past decade, foresters have seen an increase in drought induced mortality in areas with offsite plantings, particularly in the Willamette Valley.

The State and Federal government, private industry, and small non-industrial forest land owner's combined plant roughly 40 million trees per year. Typically, and based on forest site index, reforestation occurs at a density of 250 to 400 trees per acre. At those planting densities, HB 3025 would require planting on 2.5 to 4.0 million acres of land. After recent fire seasons, private landowners have struggled to find seedlings and have experienced seedling shortages as much of the forest seedling nursery infrastructure diminished during and after the recession in the late 2000s. It likely would be difficult to locate suitable seed and seedlings to satisfy HB 3025.

HB 3025 is silent about whom would be required to pay for planting trees. Seedling costs could range \$60-80 million per biennium. Labor costs could be as high as \$110 million per biennium. It is unclear if the Department or the land owner would be responsible for these costs.

ODF has statutory authority to require reforestation on commercially harvested non-Federal forest lands. The Department lacks the authority to require or compel individuals, corporations,

organizations of federal land management agencies to conduct afforestation, or restoration of burned over lands.

Afforestation is considered one of the best possibilities for increasing carbon uptake and extending carbon pools. Increasing the number of trees on the landscape does have potential and this can be done on degraded or low productivity forest and agricultural lands, as part of urban and municipal parks and green infrastructure projects, or encouraging an increase in urban forestry, which has many beneficial aspects for the health of the urban population.

In short, ODF supports work to bolster the role Oregon's forests play to mitigate climate change. We have highlighted a few statutory and financial sideboards that may create a barrier to success surrounding the extent and scope of HB 3025. The Department is interested in continuing conversations with the legislature regarding the role of Oregon's forests and forest sector to sequester carbon, both in the forest and in the built environment.

Sincerely,

Chad Davis, Legislative Coordinator, Oregon Department of Forestry