

Greetings from rural southwestern Oregonian! I am writing to urge you to support the passing of SB 335-2, which proposes much-needed reform of the Oregon Department of Forestry and its oversight board.

For too long, Oregon's Board of Forestry has been primarily influenced and represented by those who stand to profit greatly from the growth of the timber industry. This is a conflict of interest. Furthermore, the policies dictating the Oregon Forest Practices Act are antiquated and need revision.

Just today I found out that a 70 acre clearcut is planned in my neighborhood. The owners? A "Foreign Investment Corporation, LLC." That is ridiculous. None of that timber revenue stays in our community. The logs go to mills far away and the profits go out of the country. Something is wrong with that picture, don't you agree? In the 30+ years as an owner of forest commercial property, my land has become an island of healthy forest, surrounded by gyppo-logged private lands that the Oregon Department of Forestry supposedly has oversight over. Streams are trashed, sediment is running off giant networks of dirt haul roads, and the forests are struggling to recover.

The Oregon Department of Forestry is in dire need of an overhaul. Our forests are not endless. They need to be cared for and stewarded in a responsible fashion. Such is not the case at this time. They are getting trashed. My own small community depends on the forest around us for many livelihoods, but egregious sellout deals that are allowing these corporate loggers to rape and run gives us nothing and leaves us even less.

Good governance requires occasional revisions of policy and astute attention to what works and what doesn't. The Oregon Forest Practices Act and the Board that regulates it are in need of revision. SB Bill 335 is a good start. If approved it will reign in conflict of interest issues with regard to Board of Forestry appointments, ensuring that they are solely advocating for the forests and communities that they serve. It will also dissolve the Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees, which are too often a good ol' boy network that is self-serving rather than serving the needs of their communities. SB Bill 335 will also allow the Governor to hire or fire the State Forester under their leadership. This ship needs to be reigned in and the Governor should be the one to appoint the right person for the job.

Oregon needs new standards of oversight that represent all the interests of forest health and use, not just those of the timber industry members who stand to make the highest profits from it. It is simply inappropriate to have the Oregon Dept of Forestry overseen by a board with direct financial interests in the industry it oversees.

Please support SB Bill 335 and work to revise the policies of the Oregon Department of Forestry. Future generations will thank you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Evelyn Roether
Williams, Oregon