

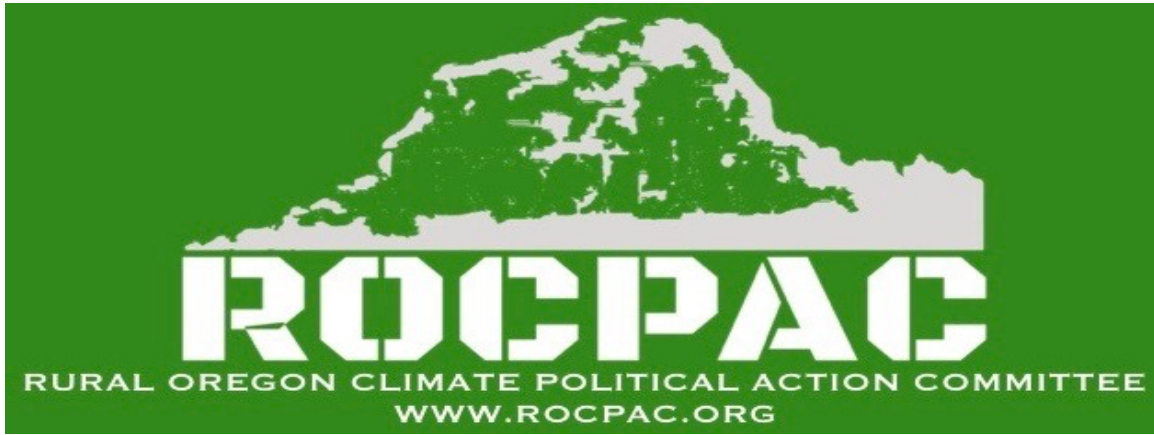
Testimony on SB335-2

Chair Golden and members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery:

My name is Dr. Hogan Sherrow and I am writing on behalf of rural Oregonians concerned about the impacts of climate change and determined to see meaningful climate legislation passed in Oregon. The intention of citizen boards that oversee agencies in the Executive Branch is that the boards are comprised of members of the public who represent the various stakeholders. In general, boards and commissions are not comprised of individuals representing the very industries being regulated by the agencies. The Board of Forestry is an exception in this regard. In fact, the prescription that, “No more than three members may receive any significant portion of their income from the forest products industry....”(<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/board/pages/aboutbof.aspx>) has become a default position that three board members will represent the timber industry.

What is additionally disturbing is that Board of Forestry members have not regularly recused themselves on issues that pertain to their business operations. Public perception tends to conclude that there are not enough “experts” outside the timber industry to populate the Board of Forestry, which is clearly incorrect. There is a wealth of forestry knowledge scattered among the conservation, environmental, social justice, tourism, recreation, labor, and water resources arenas, not to mention among scientists with forest ecology expertise. It is no longer reasonable to argue that timber harvest is so far ahead of all other interests that this should dominate the Board of Forestry. We know that our forests serve critical roles in tourism and recreation, providing rural employment, and through their role in watershed services. More recently, we have become acutely aware of the role of forests in sequestering the atom carbon, a critical contributor to global warming when combined with oxygen, hydrogen, and other atoms.

Nowhere in current statute is it decreed that these competing interests should be present on the Board of Forestry. One way to address this flawed system is to reduce or eliminate the requirement that any board members represent timber interests. Similarly, the current Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees, designed to serve the narrow interests of the timber industry compound the problem. Finally, a brief review of the manner by which agency directors are appointed across that states (<https://www.oregon.gov/das/Policies/50-060-01.attachment.pdf>) indicates that, by a vast margin, the majority are appointed or at a minimum approved by the Governor’s office. This makes sense as state agencies are



answerable to the Governor, who is, ultimately answerable to the Oregon voters for the effectiveness or lack thereof by said agencies. Right now, the Department of Forestry, through its cronyistic approach to board construction and employment and evaluation of a State Forester is failing Oregonians across the state, exacerbating the impacts of climate change in our forests and our communities, and helping to rob our children of their future. For these reasons, I write on behalf of ROCPAC to endorse SB335-2 and urge the committee to recommend its passage by the Senate and legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Hogan M. Sherrow, Ph.D.', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Hogan M. Sherrow, Ph.D.
Director
Rural Oregon Climate Political Action Committee
(ROCPAC)