

SB-335-2 proposes three needed changes to current statute:

1) Strengthens conflict of interest language for Board of Forestry (BoF) appointments:

Current statute provides that "No more than three members of the board may derive any significant portion of their income from persons or organizations that are subject to regulation. As a practical matter, that language is taken to entitle the timber industry to three of the seven BoF seats.

SB-335-2 revises that language such that up to two BoF members can derive "significant income" (which is specifically defined to enhance the statute's clarity) from forest operations or timber products. One seat is unrestricted and the second is provided for an owner of woodlands of 5000 acres or less. These seats are permitted, not mandated.

This change is essential for proper governance, so as to minimize/avoid conflicts of interest on the part of the BoF members, personally & financially.

2) Dissolves the Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees

At least two-thirds of the members of these three advisory committees must by statute be "private landowners, private timber owners or authorized representatives of such landowners or timber owners who regularly engage in operations." Staffed extensively by ODF personnel, the committees provide input on possible impacts on timber industry operations of new rules or policies that are under consideration. No advisory committee exists within ODF to represent other stakeholders in Oregon forest policy—groups focused on water resources, wildlife habitat, climate, recreation, tourism, etc.

SB-335-2 dissolves these standing committees and provides that the BoF "may establish a work group to research, assess or provide recommendations on any issue or question, as necessary to achieve the purposes. This gives the BoF flexibility to access input from any stakeholder group it chooses, whenever it chooses.

This change will help promote a balanced & unbiased policy decisions & rulemaking. Input from the timber industry on prospective ODF rules and policies is essential. There are multiple channels for providing that input, whether solicited by the BoF or ODF staff, or initiated by the industry itself. Additionally, considerable personnel resource currently used to staff these committees can be redirected to other ODF needs.

3) Transfers authority to hire or discharge the State Forester from the BoF to the Governor

SB-335-2 gives the Governor authority to hire or discharge the ODF Director, known as the State Forester. This is intended to align ODF with sound organizational practices generally. This change just makes sense.

Please support this bill, to prevent further contention between the timber industry & the communities of Oregon, & to provide clarity in these issues.

Thank you for your time & consideration,
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