



To: Senator Golden and Members of the Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery Committee

Date: March 17, 2021

Re: SB 335-3 Revising Governance of Department of Forestry

Beyond Toxics a statewide environmental justice organization advancing policies that ensure meaningful participation and cultivating grassroots leadership from Oregon's frontline and impacted communities. I am writing in support of SB 335-3 - Revising the Governance of Department of Forestry.

Beyond Toxics is a co-lead on the Climate Action Plan (OCAP) coalition's forest policy sub-table, tasked with coordinating stakeholder advocacy around implementation of Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-04 (EO 20-04). Our testimony therefore focuses on our experience with the Board of Forestry and the need to initiate governance reforms for this body. We are disappointed in the progress the Board has made to date in implementing sound forest management and climate-wise forest practices.

SB 335-3 will bring a better balance of experience, knowledge and commitment among the board members to carry out its mission to protect and manage Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic, and community sustainability. Over the past twelve years, Beyond Toxics has attended Board of Forestry meetings on numerous occasions to provide testimony on the impacts of Oregon's outdated Forest Practices Act on community health, drinking water, habitat for endangered native fish and the degradation of forest ecosystems. There is an absence of follow-up questions or responses from the Board members when testimony is perceived not to maintain the status quo of the industrial timber management model. This biased attitude shuts out public input and discourages public engagement.

This has been a year filled with pandemic, the revelation of disproportionate burdens on frontline communities through catastrophic fires, hazardous air quality levels and loss of property and life.

Yet, the Board of Forestry seems to operate in its own bubble, ignoring larger environmental, social and science issues. We need to change the governing policies so that ultimately the performance of the ODF's leadership is assessed by the Governor who is held accountable by voters for agency performance.

We appreciate Senator Golden's leadership in bringing forth the issue of undue corporate interests on the Board of Forestry and seeking a more balanced approach. We urge you to vote yes on SB 335-3 to ensure that members of the Board of Forestry and the relevant sub-committees approach their duties for public benefits, environmental protections and climate urgency with transparency, impartiality and accountability first and foremost. We need the Department of Forestry to be responsible to the State of Oregon and the public, rather than moneyed interests of the commercial forestry industry.

Sincerely,
Lisa Arkin, Executive Director
Beyond Toxics