

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

As a member of the Metro Climate Action Forestry Team and 350PDX Forest Defense Team, I am writing in support of SB 335-8 to revise the governance of the Department of Forestry. Timber companies have long held too much influence over the Department of Forestry and these change in governance will improve the health of our state forests, protect our rural communities, and improve their ability to sequester and store carbon.

Some of the amendments the committee has enacted have significantly watered down the provisions of the original bill, which I and many hundreds of members of groups with whom I am affiliated fully supported.

The current version of SB 335 would reduce the number of Board of Forestry members allowed to have a significant financial connection to the logging industry. This is appropriate and needed, but has unfortunately been weakened substantially from the original concept.

Previous versions of the bill included a much lower financial threshold for this connection (\$1,000 as opposed to \$10,000) and afforded the Governor the power to hire and fire the State Forester. I believe the original \$1,000 original threshold would be very beneficial. And I believe the Governor should have the ability to hire and fire the State Forester as is the case with many other State Agencies.

While this bill has unfortunately been weakened throughout its legislative journey, I believe it still warrants support, but would more fully support if returned to the larger reforms as initially imagined. The Board has long played a big role in upholding the status quo of the industrial timber management model in Oregon, and the status quo simply does not work in the face of the climate crisis. We need leaders who will respond to environmental, social, and science-based concerns--not the undue influence of corporate interests.

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