

Submitter: John Sweet

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Measure: SB1501

Senator Golden and members of the Oregon Senate Natural Resources Committee, I am Coos County Commissioner John Sweet. I am writing this as a representative of Coos County small forest land owners who have expressed concern about the Private Forest Accord legislation SB 1501, SB 1502, and HB4055.

To be clear, although I am a member of AOC Natural Resources Advisory Committee, I am not writing this on behalf of the committee or AOC. I agree that the work done to reach the PFA is monumental and will serve bring certainty to ownership and management of Oregon's wonderfully productive timber lands. But, I have concerns about how it has been negotiated negotiated with apparent little input from many of our small timber land owners. It is these concerns, and these only, that lead me to oppose the legislation.

I assume the major forest land owners were generally kept advised of the private negotiations which led to the PFA. Even though small owners had a seat at the table during these negotiations, my sense is that many, if not most, of them had little to no knowledge of what the resultant PFA legislation would include. The proposed legislation, which has significant impacts upon large and small ownerships alike, was not made public to small owners until just days before the first legislative hearing were held. This is not good governance. Small forest land owners have a right to be concerned.

I have two suggestions. One is to delay consideration of the PFA legislation until a full legislative session. I do not think this is the type of legislation for which short sessions were designed. The second thought is to allow small timber land owners to opt into the PFA as soon as authorized or at anytime in the future, or to opt out, in which case they would remain subject to the uncertainties the PFA seeks to avoid.

Respectively submitted,
John Sweet