



OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB  
1821 SE ANKENY ST • PORTLAND, OR 97214  
PHONE (503) 238-0442 • FAX (503) 238-6281  
OREGON.CHAPTER@SIERRACLUB.ORG  
WWW.OREGON.SIERRACLUB.ORG

### **SB 1573 - Forest Thinning Bill**

Testimony by Carol Valentine, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter Legislative Committee  
Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery - February 8, 2022

Sierra Club Oregon Chapter submits this **testimony in opposition to SB 1573**. As climate change-induced drought and winds increase across Oregon, many of our communities face increased risk from weather-driven wildfire, and especially the wind-borne embers that can ignite homes. Unfortunately, **SB 1573** focuses our state's limited resources on the wrong remedy: forest thinning (logging).

Thinning on public lands outside of the home ignition zone, 100-300 feet around structures or critical infrastructure, has time after time failed to stop the firebrands and embers that can easily destroy a home that is unprepared to resist such loss in wildfire situations. In some neighborhoods in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), fire has moved house-to-house, burning entire blocks of homes, sometimes with green trees left standing in the yard.

Forest thinning most often opens up the forest canopy, which reduces moisture retention in the forest floor and increases sunlight, encouraging growth of fire-prone shrubby vegetation. Removing trees through thinning can even increase fire risks by opening up the forest to wind. By removing trees and thereby disturbing soil, thinning releases stored carbon. This bill would move Oregon in the wrong direction on climate.

In addition, using this bill to jump start a funding mechanism whereby county governments could use income generated through thinning projects to fund further logging would create a cycle of increasing ecological harm for our rural counties, where residents depend on healthy forest water resources already at risk from commercial logging and illegal cannabis production. This highly problematic bill contains no provision for developing project selection criteria and no limitations or "sideboards" to minimize ecological damage.

Better would be fifty million dollars spent assisting vulnerable homeowners with the activities proven to protect people and property: home hardening and defensible space in the home ignition zone. We urge legislators to reject SB 1573 and avoid an unwise and irresponsible investment of our public funds.

Carol Valentine  
Forest Team Coordinator, Legislative Committee Member  
Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

*The Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club represents some 63,000 members and supporters as the state chapter of the oldest conservation organization in the United States.*