

Submitter: Roger Dorband

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB90

Please pass the SB90. It is absolutely essential that we find other ways to fund the counties in question beside cutting down more trees on our public lands, especially considering that state forestland amounts to only 3% of Oregon's total forestland.

The claim made by the plaintiffs in the legally bogus Linn County Timber Lawsuit was that the agreement made in the early 1940s by the state to favour logging in the state forest over other forest values was legally binding. That notion was deemed false by the Oregon Court of Appeals and the Oregon Supreme Court. There was no legally binding contract. The agreement that monies from logging on state forest land should go in part to the timber trust counties was a part of that agreement and is also not a legally binding contract.

The current system of funding the counties with the proceeds from logging on our public land is sadly outdated and from another era, one in which the concept of climate change was virtually unheard of. With the current reality of the rapidly increasing climate crisis the majority of climate scientists are calling for reforestation, as opposed to deforestation, as one of the most viable means of curbing this oncoming disaster. The state of Oregon has an opportunity to take a meaningful step toward the state's climate goals by stopping logging on public land.

The main resistance to SB90 is coming from those favouring the timber industry and their fierce insistence there will be no reduction in their profits regardless of potential benefits of forest management deemed necessary to protect wildlife, clean water, healthy soils, and increased opportunities for recreation. A recent email put out by the pro timber organization Oregon Forests Forever warns citizens that if SB90 goes forward individual taxes will increase. What the timber industry really fears is that there will be a reinstatement of the severance tax on the industry of the early 1990's which formerly provided the necessary funds for the counties. Through lobbying, campaign funding and some cleverly worded ballot initiatives the timber industry has greatly reduced their tax burden from the days of the severance tax. In consequence of the current sweetheart tax structure that applies to the timber industry mega financial assets corporations have moved into timber harvest in Oregon resulting in a landscape that no longer represents a "green" state.

Please pass SB90 so at least there will be a fair chance of finding alternate funding for counties.