

Submitter: Eric Halperin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB795

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Measure: Oppose SB 795

To: Chair Senator Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and Committee Members

I was a resident and business owner in Tillamook County for twenty-eight years, and now in retirement I have lived for over five years in Clatsop County. I have a full appreciation of the need for the economic viability of my home counties, from jobs, to schools, to other public services, and I understand our current dependence on revenue from the timber industry. I am also familiar with the history of the formation of the forest trusts made roughly eighty years ago, when the forested rural counties could not afford to manage their forestlands and thus turned them over to the state in exchange for on-going revenue generated from logging them.

The failed Linn County Timber lawsuit is instructive. The Oregon Supreme Court determined that the Oregon Board of Forestry has authority over state forestlands, and they deemed that there is more to the value of the forest than simply the dollar value of the timber. The rural counties are strapped for cash and see the value of the forest only in terms of dollars for logged trees. We must find a way to balance the need for jobs and revenue for schools, roads, and public safety with the need for clean water, healthy rivers and forests, recreation, and carbon sequestration. This must be done with a comprehensive state-wide plan, managing the forests for the benefit of all the residents of Oregon.

Please do not pass SB 795. Rather, move SB 90 forwards, to create a task force to begin the discussion of solving these challenging issues of forest management and rural economic viability.