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On Behalf Of: Curry County
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB795

SB 795 presents an opportunity for common sense management of our state forests. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) does a great job issuing Notification permits, enforcing fire restrictions on private logging operations, coordinating with the Department of Revenue to make sure private forest land owners pay their timber taxes and overseeing logging operations consistency with the Forest Practices Act. Since 2021 the agency has focused almost exclusively on training up for implementation of the Private Forest Accord (PFA). The agency has NOT set a priority of actively managing the state's forest lands.

Curry County owns a very small amount of forest lands. Unfortunately most of these lands will be off limits for logging with the unfounded "interpretation" that the PFA now applies to public lands. However, the small amount of land we do own is the subject of active management with the assistance of the Coos County Forestry Program. Curry County is financially destitute. We simply cannot afford to let our small forest just passively exist in the landscape as is the case with the state forest lands.

In 2021 Curry County did a land exchange with the state and received a forested parcel. As soon as the county received the parcel we went on site to determine the best management alternative. The county discovered that the Western Red Cedar was being illegally harvested and sold in Coos County for bow arrows. This ongoing theft ring operation resulted in over \$100,000. in loss of valuable Western Red Cedar. The site is now under contract to South Coast Lumber to be cleared and developed for a Veterans Housing Project. The State is simply not in a position to oversee and actively manage their forested properties under todays conditions. The Counties have eyes and ears on the land and readily see the substantial increase in the destruction of our valuable forest lands due to crime, drugs, homelessness and of most concern, the cartels. The ODF simply does not have the capability to "be there" and safeguard this resource. Further, the agencies mission has substantially changed with the PFA to one of oversight on the private sector rather than on active management of our states forests.

Curry County supports SB 795 as common sense legislation to bring back active management of our forest lands.