

Submitter: Bleauregard Kasadu
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure: SB1593

OAR 629-042, -043, and -044 already provides a requirement for a comprehensive plan to mitigate wildfire propagation on private lands and the community.

The proliferation of Oregon wildfires is not the fault of a private owner for owning timber just because that timber can be set ablaze, unless it can be found that they failed to follow the provisions of the Oregon Forest Processes Act and that contributed to the proliferation of wildfire damage.

The cause of these wildfires has more to do with a mix between a natural lifecycle of forested land and human activity that a private timber owner has very little control over.

Trees provide shade and moisture for fungal growth. Spores are lifted into the sky, providing the nucleus for cloud formation. Hot and cold air, moisture, and minerals mix, reorganizing electrical charges. A chain reaction of electricity occurs between the sky and the ground, and a lightning strike hits a tree. The fire spreads, basically releasing fertilizer everywhere for new life to form. The cycle continues. An important natural cycle for good forest health, equating stocks of good and bountiful timber.

The litter build-up on the ground has specific layers and multiple benefits for forestland, but it needs moisture. Human-inspired Climate Change has moved massive amounts of moisture from one region to another in unprecedented ways, leaving places like forests of Oregon more drought-prone and flammable. They can usually help to dampen the intensity of wildfires, but now they're contributing to them.

Enacting a tax on private timber owners would do nothing to solve this, would exacerbate their ability to support wildfire mitigation procedures required of them, and would place undue strain on an already constricted timber industry. Plus, it unfairly targets private timber owners while leaving timber companies who harvest on state land free of the tax. The risk of wildfire has more to do with a phenomenon of global societies, failures in power company infrastructures, and accidents by tourists rather than the practices of timber companies and private timber owners.