

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and members of the Senate Rules Committee,

My name is Theresa Hausser and my wife and I own a small burned woodland property in Vida. I am writing in opposition to SB 1051.

I opposed a very similar bill, SB 335, in 2021. Four years of diligent study and post-fire reforestation efforts lead me to oppose SB 1051 more strongly and from a perspective more informed by the work of caring for (and not just about) forestland.

The breadth and depth of the damage from the 2020 Labor Day fires is still being discovered. Survivor trees have been snapping or being uprooted in wind events this winter/spring, as it appears there was much more root damage done during the fires than had been thought initially. Fires and extreme weather events are now part of the equations in planning for sound stewardship of our forests. Oregon's forests need leadership that understands forestry deeply enough to adapt to the seemingly daily new challenges forests experience. Post-disaster salvage (for just one example) is not going to disappear as a concern, as these once-in-a- (name your time frame) disasters are occurring regularly. A State Forester without deep understanding and experience with forests is not going to be adequately equipped to chart a course of stewardship/management in these fraught conditions.

Making the State Forester (a) a political appointee (b) without an academic and professional requirement for forestry expertise leaves Oregon's forests even more vulnerable to the vagaries of politics and climate/weather than they already are. It makes the Board of Forestry—already a board of political appointees—of questionable utility. It leaves all of us in forestry uncertain about the viability of working forests (and all of us, even small landowners who never anticipated harvesting, are adversely affected when forest management infrastructure is threatened or eliminated).

Forest stewardship by way of politics is not sound stewardship. In fact, it is reasonable to question if it is stewardship at all. This bill, much like 2021's SB 335, sounds more like the further politicization of forestry in Oregon, rather than a solution to a problem.

Thank you for your consideration.