

March 25, 2025

Senate Committee On Rules

RE: Opposition to SB 1051

Chair Senator Jama, Vice-Chair Senator Bonham, and members of the committee,

My name is Mike Barsotti. I've previously provided written testimony on SB 1051 and testified at yesterday's, March 24th, public hearing.

A concern not mentioned yesterday is that if the governor assumes the authority to manage the State Forester, the Board of Forestry becomes simply an advisory group. I fear that a board that is simply an advisory committee will lose the will to send the countless hours needed to assure the health of Oregon's forests, and thus no longer function in the remarkable way it has for over 100 years. This would be a terrible loss to Oregon.

From listening to the governor's concerns and all of the testimony in opposition, it appears to me that the governor's concern is with the Board of Forestry's hiring process. The problem is that the solution, SB 1051, is fraught with serious, negative unintended consequences.

I remain firm that SB 1051 needs to be defeated. Maybe the Governor's Office can work with stakeholders and the Board of Forestry to find a way to attract more quality candidates. OFIC's representative mentioned yesterday that they too share the concern of attracting more quality State Forester candidates. I assume they would be willing to assist in improving the hiring process.

Oregon has the best wildfire program in the nation and a successful forest regulatory program that that were developed over many years by the Board of Forestry partnering with stakeholders and interest groups. We need to maintain this current structure.

Mike Barsotti