



JEWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT #8

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April 22, 2015

Oregon Board of Forestry
Oregon Department of Forestry
Salem Headquarters
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

Members of the Board of Forestry:

I am here on behalf of the 151 students of the Jewell School District. Jewell is located in Clatsop County and is a community deeply invested in its pioneer and logging roots. We like to call it the Gem of the Pacific Northwest.

Unlike many schools that benefit from forest harvests through the common school fund, revenues from local sales on state forests lands also flow directly to our district through distributions to our timber counties. These funds support critical teaching and other support services for our students. Therefore, we ask that the Board of Forestry keep careful attention to its financial obligations to Forest Trust counties when setting harvest rates on state forest lands.

Our District provides critically needed educational opportunities in a community that has struggled in recent years. Today, over half of our students are economically disadvantaged. My teachers and staff know the difference we make in these children's lives and that a good education is their best shot at a better life. That is why we take so seriously the ability to provide the instruction and classroom support that will help these children succeed.

Like many other school districts in Forest Trust counties, we depend on funds from timber sales on Forest Trust Lands to operate. In fact, 99% of our district's funding is sourced from timber sales on state forestlands. And these funds make a real difference. While some districts are struggling with crowded classrooms and program cuts, our students enjoy smaller classes with more time for personalized instruction and are even able to offer classes such as Horticulture and Forestry. We count on those funds to be able to set a reliable budget each year and not have to worry about making mid-year cuts in services to children.

Even as timber revenues have shrunk in recent decades, we have been able to continue offering these educational opportunities to the children of Jewell. But we face the very real prospect of having to limit these programs if harvest levels on local state forestlands continue to decline. I have real fears that as we face a downward spiral where the loss of jobs in the woods leaves local students with few

prospects to stay in the local community and curtailed academic offerings leave them less prepared to compete with others across Oregon and the country. We are quite literally talking about the future of this community.

As you know, currently the Oregon Department of Forestry is only harvesting roughly half of the annual growth on Trust Lands. Each year as that excess volume is added to the growing standing inventory it comes at the expense of the counties, communities, special districts, and school districts that are reliant upon an equitable harvest rate and corresponding timber sales to fund critical services. Our District is preparing for what this would mean for us in the years to come and we are not alone. Entire communities throughout the state are looking at the same future; all of us are looking to this Board for action.

I strongly encourage the Board of Forestry to take steps to ensure an equitable management plan that will meet the twin goals of conservation and the social/financial needs of small, Oregon communities. We believe that dedicating 70% of Trust Lands for timber production while setting aside and up to 30% of those lands for conservation will meet those twin goals. In doing so, this Board will help school districts like ours continue to do our best for our students in the classroom while ensuring that those students have beautiful, healthy forests in which to explore.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike Scott
Principal, Jewell School District