



JEWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT #8

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

Members of the Board of Forestry:

I currently serve as the Superintendent of Schools for the Jewell School District. I am here today on behalf of the Jewell School Board of Directors, faculty and most importantly our 160 students. As you may recall, Jewell Principal Mike Scott provided testimony at your April meeting. Please accept my remarks today as further reinforcement of the importance of careful Forest Trust Lands management planning.

Jewell School District is located in rural Clatsop County and is a community with significant history in the logging industry. The Jewell community's dependence on the timber industry is multifaceted. Differing from most schools in the state, Jewell School's primary source of revenue is derived from local forest land sales. Proceeds from forest sales flow directly to our district through county distributions. These funds support all instructional programs, extracurricular activities, employee costs and related service programs for our students. While most districts across the state are jockeying for tax revenues and state school support dollars, we are manipulating our resources to respond to the ebb and flow of the area timber sales. Any good business plan includes promotion of long term financial stability and our school is no different.

As a small rural school, it is more costly to provide services to our students that are equitable to those students living in districts less remote and isolated. I believe that every child in our state should have fair access to all programs in order to ensure the greatest likelihood that they will eventually be able to have an education that leads them to viable employment.

In order to maintain our programs at Jewell School, we must be able to plan beyond the next quarter of forest revenues. We need a solid plan for the next ten years that supports our timber related industries and resources while protecting the future of our states natural resources with appropriate conservation measures. I appreciate the annual harvest and sales projections, however, the revenues we receive are dependent on the three year harvest window, making annual planning and certainly long term planning more difficult. Therefore, we ask that the Board of Forestry pay careful attention to its financial obligations to Forest Trust counties when setting harvest rates and designations of state forest lands.

Jewell School District provides critically needed educational opportunities in a community that has struggled in recent years. Over half of our students are economically disadvantaged. Many of our families that were once supported by jobs in the timber industry are those now living in conditions of poverty. Rural poverty is a very dismal and discouraging predicament to combat.

By increasing the timber sales, it is possible to revitalize communities such as Jewell while providing school districts with consistent and predictable revenues. This allows us to keep our annual budget at current funding levels as well as creating a long term plan for financial viability.

Decreasing timber sales will further devastate the economy of our Jewell community and result in a greater number of our families being thrust into the throes of poverty. I believe that if the status quo is maintained, the result becomes the same as decreasing timber sales. Traction is lost in keeping up with the inflation rate and cost of living.

For Jewell School District, the status quo and the current pace of timber sales would reduce the quality of our students' education and the economy of our community. Our educational programs will suffer from reductions resulting in our students being further behind their peers statewide. Because we are so small, the programs we offer are already very limited. Additional cuts due to decreased funding will decimate our remaining elective programs. In our rural area, technology and elective STEM classes are where many of our students have interests. The electives we offer are the heart of our school and are the very reason many of our students come to school. Although limited, they create important connections with students. Jewell High School offers vocational technology, forestry, band, horticulture, and an occasional AP Course. These programs would be cut to be able to meet the state required courses. Jewell also has a Pre-School for our districts three to five year olds. The nearest other pre-school is an hour away.

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 increasing 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 our critical services.

I strongly encourage the Board of Forestry to take steps to ensure an equitable management plan that will meet the dual goals of conservation and the social and financial needs of small, Oregon communities. By dedicating 70% of Trust Lands for timber production while setting aside up to 30% of those lands for conservation, the Board of Forestry will meet those dual goals. By taking this action, the Board's leadership 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 in their future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Alice L. Hunsaker
Superintendent, Jewell School District