

July 23, 2015

Testimony to Board of Forestry

Andy Petersen, Forest landowner in Lane County

Hi, my name is Andy Petersen. My family and I own 930 acres of forestland in Lane County. We have owned and managed forestlands in our valley for 126 years. There are over 21,000 lineal feet of fish bearing streams on our properties. The current Forest Practice Laws encumber nearly 5% of our forests with a current value today of over \$205,000. I support the current Riparian Rules because I believe they adequately protect the health and beneficial uses of forest streams. A 100 foot no-touch buffer, as proposed as an option by the Department of Forestry, would have a tremendous economic impact on me, my family, and our descendants. Should the Board choose to implement a 100 foot no touch buffer on all our streams, the State would steal over \$445,000 worth of our timber assets and more than double our encumbered acres.

My great-great grandparents moved to Camp Creek in 1889 and my grandparents bought our ranch in 1941 and passed down the mandate to leave the lands God entrusts us with better than how we found them because we are simply the stewards of these lands. We take that trust seriously. In the last 15 years, we have worked closely with the McKenzie Watershed Council, the USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service to fence or remove cattle from over 10,000 feet of stream as well as nearly every spring and wetland on our property. In addition, we have partnered with the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Fish and Wildlife and the NRCS to perpetually place 83 acres of forest ground and its streams into the Healthy Forest Reserve Program to provide and enhance sustainable wildlife habitat as well as stream quality. Even now, we are working with the Eugene Water and Electric Board to reduce the amount of nitrogen placed on our pastures and also to utilize pumps that operate without electricity to water our cattle outside of riparian areas. Not one of these decisions that we have made to protect our soil and water quality was mandated. Like the vast majority of other private forestland owners, we are simply demonstrating our continued commitment to my grandparent's desire to leave the lands and water better than when we started managing them.

I believe the board knows and acknowledges that science related to fish in forest streams clearly shows there is no harm to any fish species resulting from the current rules. That being the case, it is hard to understand why the board would consider placing additional encumbrances on our family's lands and on our state's economy. One thing I can guarantee you--no one in this room or in this state cares more about stream and forest health on our lands more than I and my family do. Please stand up to political pressure and agendas and say "NO" to those trying to steal our assets and our ability to carefully and practically manage and protect our forestlands and streams. You have an opportunity to say "yes" to strong science and common sense. Please do so. Thank you very much for your commitment to healthy streams, healthy forests, healthy families and a healthy economy. Thank you!