



SB 335 -3: A wise change in governance for the Department of Forestry

Testimony for Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery – Jody Wisner – 3.17.2021

Oregon's departments – from Health and Human Services and Higher Ed to the Departments of Environmental Quality and Revenue – serve as the staff of the Governor in carrying out the will of the people through the laws and budgets set by the Legislature. Thus, it has long been problematic for the Department of Forestry to be led by an administrator chosen by the industry rather than the Governor. The difficulties in bringing our Forest Practices Act into compliance with federal law (and thus our loss of millions of federal dollars), in actually enforcing the scant laws and regulations we do have, and most recently the Governor's difficulty in successfully recommending members to the Board of Forestry are evidence that there needs to be significant changes in governance at the Department of Forestry.

In my review of half a dozen state departments, only the director of the Department of Transportation is also selected by a Board or Commission rather than the Governor. However, none of the five members of the Transportation Commission runs a private road-building or rail company. The Transportation Commission members most engaged in the transportation industry are the general manager for the Rogue Valley Transportation District and the owner of a disposal and recycling company. The Governor has recently appointed the Directors of the Department of Revenue and Business Oregon.

SB 335 reduces the power of the commercial timber industry in three key ways:

- 1) The Governor rather than Board of Forestry appoints the head of ODF,
- 2) The makeup of the Board of Forestry changes from three to two members of the seven-member board who can have significant income from forest operations or wood products, and
- 3) It dissolves three standing Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees which are dominated by timber owners or their representatives (two of the three members of each committee). Instead the bill allows the Oregon Department of Forestry to form committees and seek advice, as they choose.

It is time for the Legislature to create a more balanced governance structure that asserts the role of the Department of Forestry as a department of the State of Oregon rather than a department of the commercial forestry industry.

We urge you to resist efforts to weaken this bill. These are wise changes.

Testimony for Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery – Jody Wisner – 3.17.2021

Oregon's departments – from Health and Human Services and Higher Ed to the Departments of Environmental Quality and Revenue – serve as the staff of the Governor in carrying out the will of the people through the laws and budgets set by the Legislature. Thus, it has long been problematic for the Department of Forestry to be led by an administrator chosen by the industry rather than the Governor. The difficulties in bringing our Forest Practices Act into compliance with federal law (and thus our loss of millions of federal dollars), in actually enforcing the scant laws and regulations we do have, and most recently the Governor's difficulty in successfully recommending members to

the Board of Forestry are evidence that there needs to be significant changes in governance at the Department of Forestry.

In my review of half a dozen state departments, only the director of the Department of Transportation is also selected by a Board or Commission rather than the Governor. However, none of the five members of the Transportation Commission runs a private road-building or rail company. The Transportation Commission members most engaged in the transportation industry are the general manager for the Rogue Valley Transportation District and the owner of a disposal and recycling company. The Governor has recently appointed the Directors of the Department of Revenue and Business Oregon. That's the normal practice in our state.

SB 335 reduces the power of the commercial timber industry in three key ways:

- 1) The Governor rather than Board of Forestry appoints the head of ODF,
- 2) The makeup of the Board of Forestry changes from three to two members of the seven-member board who can have significant income from forest operations or wood products, and
- 3) It dissolves three standing Regional Forest Practices Advisory Committees which are dominated by timber owners or their representatives (two of the three members of each committee). Instead the bill allows the Oregon Department of Forestry to form committees and seek advice, as they choose.

It is time for the Legislature to create a more balanced governance structure that asserts the role of the Department of Forestry as a department of the State of Oregon rather than a department of the commercial forestry industry.

We urge you to resist efforts to weaken this bill. These are wise changes.

We read the bills and follow the money