

Ban on clear-cutting proposed for Oregon watersheds

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
EO Media Group

A proposed ban on clear-cutting, pesticide-spraying, road-building and fertilizing in Oregon’s forested watersheds is raising fears of severe disruptions to timber production.

Proponents of House Bill 2656 say the prohibitions are needed to protect the quality of drinking water while opponents worry they’d effectively eliminate commercial logging across millions of acres.

“This bill would cripple our ability to cost-effectively and competitively manage our forestland,” said Doug Cooper, vice president of resources for Hampton Lumber.

More than half of the company’s 89,000 forested acres in Oregon are in watersheds affected by the bill, he said.

During a March 12 legislative hearing, the bill’s chief sponsor — Rep. Andrea Salinas, D-Lake Oswego — acknowledged that HB 2656 may seem “drastic” and said she hoped the proposal would start a conversation about the “right solution” for protecting watersheds.

The bill has alarmed the

timber industry because even if the most sweeping restrictions are pared down, it could still result in stricter regulations on forestry practices, such as aerial spraying.

Supporters of the bill testified before the House Committee on Energy and the Environment that the forestry practices in question have increased chemicals, sediments and temperatures in waterways, endangering rural communities.

While many larger municipalities have bought the forested watersheds that provide their drinking water, smaller and less affluent communities are often dependent on waterways that run through private timberland, according to proponents.

“Unfortunately, most Oregonians don’t enjoy such protections for their drinking water,” said Greg Haller, executive director of the bill Pacific Rivers environmental group.

Haller said the evidence is “incontrovertible” that existing protections under the Oregon Forest Practices Act are insufficient to ensure safe drinking water. The current laws and regulations have been influenced by “Wall Street foresters” who stand the most to lose



Trees are harvested in Oregon’s Cascade Mountains. A bill before Oregon lawmakers would ban clear-cutting, road-building and use of pesticides and fertilizers in forested watersheds.

from HB 2656, he said.

Logging practices are aggravating water supply problems that will grow more serious over time with climate change, said John Talberth, senior economist with the Sustainable Energy and Economy Network.

Streamflows in forests planted roughly four decades ago are 50 percent lower than in forests with trees between 150 to 500 years old, said Talberth.

Clear-cutting, pesticide-spraying and fertilization are conducive to the

kind of toxic algal blooms that occurred in the city of Salem’s drinking water reservoir last year, he said.

Risky activities should be prohibited and regulations should instead follow “ecological forestry” principles, Talberth said. “These practices are win-win-win solutions for landowners, workers and communities.”

Opponents of the bill, including many small forestland owners, say the proposed restrictions are not only uneconomical but unnecessary. They point

to a finding by Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality that water quality conditions are most commonly rated “excellent” and “good” in Oregon’s forests compared to other land types.

The agency also determined Oregon’s forests contained the smallest proportion of “poor” and “very poor” water quality sites compared to cities, farmland and rangeland.

“Contemporary practices protect our water,” said Maryanne Reiter, a hydrolo-

gist with the Weyerhaeuser timber company.

Federal studies have confirmed that rules against pesticide drift prevent unsafe herbicides in waterways while also indicating sediment levels remain similar before and after logging, she said. Sedimentation is more closely related to an area’s geology, rainfall and fire history than land use practices, Reiter said.

“House Bill 2656 is an unnecessary and extreme solution in search of a problem,” said Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau. By eliminating the incentive to keep lands in timber production, the proposal would threaten the conversion of forests to other uses, she said.

The prohibition against pesticides would hinder the fight against invasive species in forests while also banning the use of common “bug spray” at camp sites, Cooper said.

A lack of management would leave forests more vulnerable to wildfires, which in recent years have predominantly occurred on federal lands with greatly reduced timber harvest levels, said Peter Sikora, CEO of the Giustina Resources timber company.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY

Chilly with some sun

FRIDAY

Partly sunny and chilly

SATURDAY

Chilly with some sun

SUNDAY

Partly sunny and chilly

MONDAY

Mostly sunny

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST									
44°	25°	44°	27°	47°	29°	50°	31°	52°	32°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST									
47°	28°	47°	30°	49°	32°	54°	32°	57°	35°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	42°	32°
Normals	54°	35°
Records	74° (2015)	8° (1906)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

Month to date	0.39"
Normal month to date	0.50"
Year to date	5.24"
Last year to date	3.03"
Normal year to date	3.01"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	48°	30°
Normals	57°	34°
Records	75° (2003)	13° (1941)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

Month to date	0.10"
Normal month to date	0.41"
Year to date	3.49"
Last year to date	1.83"
Normal year to date	2.65"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Fri.
Boardman	NE 3-6	NE 4-8
Pendleton	ENE 4-8	N 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:11 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:59 p.m.
Moonrise today	11:47 a.m.
Moonset today	2:28 a.m.

First

Full

Last

New

Mar 14

Mar 20

Mar 27

Apr 5

Governor signs funding package to pay down Medicaid debt

SALEM (AP) — Oregon will pay off half of its Medicaid debt through new taxes on health care providers.

Gov. Kate Brown on Wednesday approved a six-year tax on hospitals and insurance plans to help fund the state’s \$950 million Medicaid shortfall. The move is expected to bring in over \$430 million.

The state has been struggling to keep up with Medicaid funding after a drop in federal contributions. The governor hopes to make up the rest of the money through a tax on tobacco and e-cigarettes. She’s also exploring a tax on employers who don’t provide workers affordable health care coverage.

Legislative budget leaders say that without new revenue, Oregon will have to fill the rest of the approximate \$450 million funding gap through its general fund.

Proud Boy pleads not guilty to Portland assault

PORTLAND (AP) — A member of the right-wing Proud Boys group has pleaded not guilty to felony third-degree assault and misdemeanor fourth-degree assault in connection with the June attack of a man in Oregon.

Donovan Lyle Flippo of Vancouver, Washington, entered the pleas Wednesday in Multnomah County Circuit Court, *The Oregonian*/OregonLive reported.

Flippo, 23, was arrested on a warrant Tuesday, a day after Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler complained that

law enforcement was basically ignoring violent protests in the city and failing to arrest violent activists.

Proud Boys members have been violent at protests in the past. Protests occur often in Portland and police have at times struggled to contain clashes.

Multnomah County Circuit Judge Karin Immergut ordered Flippo on Wednesday to have no contact with the man who was attacked or the co-defendant, Tusitala “Tiny” Toese, while the case is pending.

Toese, another Proud Boy member, hasn’t been arrested. He and Flippo appear together in many social media posts and often attend right-wing demonstrations in Portland.

Flippo and Toese were indicted last month after a 35-year-old man said Flippo and another man shouted homophobic slurs at him before punching him in the face.

The man said he was waiting at a stoplight on June 8 when he saw Toese, Flippo and a third man in a truck. The man said the men in the truck were yelling things about Trump, and shouting, “Build the wall!” He said he motioned at them with his hand or arm, trying to dismiss them. As he crossed the street, he said they yelled homophobic slurs at him so he shouted an expletive back at Toese, calling him by his nickname “Tiny.”

When the man got to the other corner, he said he saw Toese and Flippo get out of the truck and rush toward him. The man said he had a minor concussion and went to the hospital, where he got stitches for a split lip.

Flippo said he didn’t know the man, according to court records.

Another Vancouver man posted 10 percent of Flippo’s \$7,500 bail and he was released from custody Tuesday night, court and jail records show.

Report reveals Oregon rape kit backlog testing success

PORTLAND (AP) — A new report says the elimination of Oregon’s backlog of untested rape kits has led to hundreds of new DNA profiles being added to a national database and multiple cases have been prosecuted. The report from the Manhattan District Attorney’s office was released on Tuesday.

Oregon was one of 20 states to benefit from a \$38 million grant program created in 2015 to process thousands of untested rape kits across the country.

KOIN reports the Multnomah County District Attorney’s Office and its law enforcement partners around Oregon worked to test 2,913 sexual assault kits under the grant program.

Through that testing, officials were able to enter 882 DNA profiles into the FBI’s national database. More than half of those profiles matched those already in the database.

So far, those DNA matches have led to six convictions across Oregon.

Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill joined Manhattan’s district attorney at a news conference on Tuesday in New York and later spoke at a panel on legislative reform about how challenging it can be to eliminate untested rape kit backlogs. He explained that getting funding to prioritize the testing rape kits required many conversations with legislators.

“We’re very proud of where we’ve come from and where we’re now,” Underhill said.

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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