

Chair Imeson, State Forester Decker, Members of the Board,

My name is Chris Smith and I am here on behalf of the North Coast State Forest Coalition to briefly address the issue of county input into critical processes around state forest management.

Over the last four years, I have witnessed the process by which trustland counties advise this Board on state forest decisions. There have been several eye-opening moments, but none as surprising as last Friday when I was asked not to attend a Council of Forest Trust Land Counties meeting by Chair Josi. This was a public meeting at which a quorum of the FTLAC was present.

This unfortunate example indicates a lack of openness and transparency that allows for the chair and a few other commissioners to dominate the county discussion around state forests. The resultant input to the Board nearly always reflects a perspective that sees timber harvest placed above all other forest values. This input does not reflect the diversity of county opinions pertaining to state forest management.

As a Board, I would urge you to ensure that you are getting comprehensive and honest input from all of the forest trustland counties. The relationship that these counties have with state forests is often described as “special.” It would be good if that relationship was based on open and honest input reflective of more than just one person’s opinion.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.