

STATEMENT TO ODF BOARD

June 7, 2017

We're here today because, as a property owners, we have not been allowed to question the actions of the Forestland Classification Committee.

I know that you have received a staff report which states that we had a chance to appeal the Committee decision, but the report left out some important facts.

The notice sent out to property owners by the ODF notifying them of the Committee decisions was done by postcard. At the meeting in Seaside held by Sen. Johnson and Rep. Boone, after we had been notified we were being assessed, of the 60 or so property owners present only 2 or 3 said they had received the postcard.

The postcard indicated that we had 30 days to appeal the Classification Committee decision through the Circuit Court. Having not received the postcards, people did not know about their property being reclassified as Forestland and therefore did not have the opportunity to appeal.

At that same meeting, ODF officials stated that they realize that most people don't pay attention to postcards and often just toss them as junk mail. Knowing this, why didn't they send letters to property owners as they have with all other communications? They said they we're "doing the best they could." That's nice, but we taxpayers deserve better than that.

The staff report also states that the ODF individually met with property owners who had filed appeals to the Forestland assessment. What the report fails to state is that, at the meeting ODF reps only reviewed talking points but would not or could not answer questions about the classification status. I was told to put my questions in writing and they would be addressed at the Classification Committee meeting scheduled for April 13th. Two days before that meeting I was told by ODF that no questions would be allowed at the meeting.

I was also told that my questions had been forwarded to Bob Young at ODF in Salem for response. I talked to Mr. Young on the phone and he said that he would respond to my questions before this hearing.. My questions were submitted on April 7th. Today is June and there has still been no answer from ODF.

The letter from ODF notifying me that my property was subject to a Forestland Assessment contained the following definition:

"The Astoria District has one "class" of forestland. Forestland suitable for the production of timber is classified as Class 1..."

I live on a lake in the Clatsop Plains. My 5 acre property consists of a house, barn, landscaped grounds and grazing area for my cows. To the west is a lake, to the south are cattle and horse grazing properties, to the east are 1 acre residential properties and to the north is another 5 acre residence. There is no timber anywhere even close. In fact, Clatsop County has determined that my property (in fact our whole area) is "not suitable for timber production."

I don't know how the Classification Committee ignored or disregarded this definitional conflict. There are two reasons for my confusion; 1) the Committee did not keep minutes of the meeting where they allegedly discussed my property, and 2) they won't answer questions.

As an aside - In the Central Oregon District classification maps and committed meeting minutes were posted on their website for all to see. I had to file a Freedom of Information Act request and pay to get copies of the Clatsop County Forestland Classification Committee meeting minutes. As it turned out there were several Committee meetings for which no minutes were kept so the public has no idea of the basis on which decisions were made. Why wasn't the Astoria District as open and transparent as Central Oregon?

I ask that the board reject the proposed orders as they pertain to those of us who appealed the ODF decisions, and that we be given a fair and impartial review of our properties with the ability to ask questions of those performing the review.

Respectively,

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