

To the State Board of Forestry.

The property that my wife and I purchased in November of 2016 at 77316 Hwy 99 in Cottage Grove Or, tax lot number 939445, from the best I can determine based off of the lack of detail on the county maps, was classified as forestland. When you read the definition of forestland the term clearing is used. This term is so broad and all encompassing that a lake would fall into their definition of forestland under a clearing. Under that same definition of forestland it states that the land contains enough forest growth, slashing or vegetation to constitute, in the judgement of a forester, a fire hazard, regardless of how the land is zoned or taxed. While the property we own is not a lake I am fairly confident that a forester would have a hard time coming to the conclusion that our property would be considered a fire hazard. This property consists of a house, driveway, flowerbeds, three trees that have all of the limbs cut up off of the ground, and a mowed yard. None of these things are conducive to the ignition or spread of a wildfire.

I fought wildfire for seven seasons with the USFS and am well aware of the dangers wildfires can pose to property owners, that is the reason I have done what I can do to mitigate the threat to this property. I am also in the process of residing my house with a concrete board which will also cut down on the fire risk.

One major concern I have with this entire process is the fact that these properties that were added into the forestland tax assessment were not looked at on an individual basis and therefor a lot of properties like mine were lumped into this assessment without having been given the proper consideration. I understand that there was no feasible way for every property to be looked at individually however this does allow for a lot of properties to be unjustly incorporated. Another concern I have with this process is that a few private land owners were on the decision making board for this. The way that it was explained to me is that the overall budget for ODF does not change however the amount each property is taxed changes based on the number of properties being taxed. This would mean that some of the people making the decisions on the forestland tax assessment have a finical incentive to include more properties into the tax assessment area.

Once again I would like to reiterate the fact that I fully believe a forester would have a hard time coming to the conclusion that this property is a fire hazard as stated in section 3 of ORS 526.005 [(5)(a)] (6)(a).

Thank you for your time and your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,  
Jered Evans