

Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee

Local Government Center
1201 Court Street NE, Ste 300
Salem, OR 97301

David Yamamoto, Chair
Commissioner
Tillamook County

John Sweet, Vice
Commissioner
Coos County

Marybeth Bell
Commissioner
Wheeler County

Patricia Sullivan
Commissioner
Clatsop County

Jim Beardsley
Commissioner
Clackamas County

Will Tucker
Commissioner
Lane County

Bob Mann
Commissioner
Wasco County

April 24, 2019

Chair Imeson, State Forester Daugherty, Members of the Board of Forestry,

For the record, I am Tillamook County Commissioner David Yamamoto, Chair of the Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee (FTLAC). Thank you for the opportunity to comment today on issues important to the Forest Trust Lands Counties.

At the recent FTLAC meeting held on Friday, April 12, State Forester Daugherty briefed the County Commissioners on aspects of the carbon discussion that is taking place in the legislature known as HB 2020, also known as carbon cap and invest, as it relates to Forest Trust Lands.

It is clear that at this time, we simply do not have enough (actually, any) information about how the management of the Forest Trust Lands will be impacted by implementation of HB 2020. It appears that possible forest carbon offsets will continue to be a topic of discussion related to the development of this legislation, and Forest Trust Lands Commissioners must be directly involved in this discussion.

FTLAC wants to clearly articulate our priorities for the forest trust lands which are twofold: 1) returning as much revenue as possible to trust counties, schools and local service districts; and 2) ensuring the economic and social stability of our counties by retaining jobs in the timber industry. We do not see a scenario where carbon offset revenue can replace that of timber harvest and still maintain our priorities.

We are encouraged that ODF is currently developing an assessment of the carbon stored in manufactured wood products, so that the accounting of carbon sequestration through the lifecycle of all forest products represents the complete picture, not just what is in the forest. We strongly encourage ODF to consider a "lifecycle analysis" which takes into account a more complete accounting of carbon and the use of finished wood products...especially in the building trades. If we continue to build with finished forest products, that means we are not building with concrete, steel, or aluminum, and therefore we have an additional benefit to atmospheric carbon balance. We look forward to the outcome of that assessment.

As we have said in the past, jobs in the woods, the mills, and trucking are some of our best jobs, paying benefitted family supportive wages that contribute significantly to the social stability in rural Oregon. At the last FTLAC meeting, Vice-Chair and Coos County Commissioner John Sweet shared some painful news about the recently announced closing of the Georgia Pacific forest products mill in Coos County, and the subsequent loss of 111 family wage jobs. Commissioner Sweet told us that, in the 6 years since he became a county commissioner, BLM has eliminated regeneration harvest on 60,000 acres of Coos

Bay Wagon Roads land and 150,000 acres of O&C land in Coos County. The State of Oregon has eliminated harvest on 60,000 acres of Elliott State Forest Common School Fund Lands plus 7,000 acres of Elliott Forest County Trust Lands in Coos County. In Coos County alone, that is the loss of 277,000 acres of timber harvest. This last week, one of that County's major employers, Georgia Pacific, shut down their Coos Bay sawmill.

Coos County is dependent on natural resources for family wage jobs. Loss of family wage jobs has resulted in Coos County being among the 8 worst counties in Oregon for the incidence of poverty. The frustrations of poverty have driven the rates of substance abuse, spousal abuse, and child abuse to high levels. Last year the Kids Hope Center, a facility for treating abused children saw 427 patients, and, generally speaking, only one out of every two or three child abuse cases are reported. The high school graduation rate stands at just 58 percent. Poverty is generational. Coos County is currently heading into the third generation of children who have never seen their parents get up and go to work at 8:00am five days a week. People have become used to surviving on public handouts and criminal activity. It's not good.

I wish Commissioner Sweet were able to be here in person to deliver this devastating news so you could hear the dismay in his voice. We all lament this disheartening news coming from Coos County.

I would be remiss if I were not to present testimony you have heard before concerning your potential actions about the Marbled Murrelet. The Technical Report presented to you earlier today points to issues known and unknown about this cryptic and secretive bird. The report refers many times to gaps in our knowledge. What is known and reported is that the Oregon population is not decreasing...rather it is increasing at 1.8% per year over the last 16 years which accounts for a 28.8% increase in Marbled Murrelet population over that period.

Trust Land Counties remain attentive to the updated Technical Report for the Marbled Murrelet. Potential future actions taken by the BOF would affect management of state and county owned lands along the Oregon Coast. We appreciate the Department clarifying the sparse and conflicting nature of the present data on the Murrelet and will continue to monitor the progress as new science is added to the ongoing narrative surrounding this species.

It is important to note again that OSU is in the 3rd year of a 10 year study of the Marbled Murrelet. Because of the uncertainty and gaps in our current knowledge as well as scientific data telling us that the population is actually increasing, we feel it important to await the results of the OSU study before jumping to unwarranted conclusions and enacting rules which will have detrimental effects on Forest Trust Lands Counties and its residents.

You are about to receive an update on the status of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Forest Management Plan (FMP). The Trust Counties continue to work with the Department on both of these issues, but we have a hurdle in addressing the HCP. I hope you are all aware of the Linn County Class Action Lawsuit and that the trial court has already held that you have contractual obligations to us that cannot be altered without our express consent. Trust County Commissioners have been advised by our County Counsels to be careful in addressing issues which may be relevant to the proceedings in this case, which is scheduled for a jury trial beginning in October of this year.

ODF has engaged the services of Oregon Consensus and Kearns and West to provide 3rd party, independent facilitation to assist in developing input on HCP development. When Trust County Commissioners were approached to participate in a survey and interviews concerning development of an HCP, our County Counsels advised us not to participate in this activity. While County Commissioners feel it is important to lend our voices to this conversation, we must abide by counsel recommendations.

I need to state here that in the recent past, we had approached the ODF and OJD in an attempt to negate this issue by asking that any conversations between ODF and CFTLC Commissioners be not admissible in Court for the Linn County Class Action Lawsuit. We were told that, that despite our offer, OJD would not agree to this action.

In an attempt to further a conversation with the Department about HCP development, I have received permission to accept appointment to the ODF HCP Steering Committee or the HCP Scoping Team and have been told this was not possible. I will continue my efforts to find a way that Trust Land Counties can actively participate in this discussion.

Members of the Board of Forestry, as you discuss your actions on carbon sequestration, the Forest Management Plan, Habitat Conservation Plan, and the Marbled Murrelet, please consider the very real impacts that reducing harvest has on our abilities to finance much needed government services, our communities and families in rural Oregon.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer questions.

Respectfully submitted,

David Yamamoto
Tillamook County Commissioner
Chair, FTLAC