



September 4, 2019

Thomas Imeson  
Oregon Board of Forestry  
2600 State Street  
Salem, OR 97310

**Re: Agenda Item 5e, Forest Sector Employment and Economic Forecast**

Dear Chair Imeson and Members of the Forestry Board:

My name is Kristin Rasmussen and I work for Hampton Lumber, a family-owned company that has been operating in the state for nearly 80 years. We have four sawmills and manage roughly 80,000 acres of timberland in northwest Oregon in addition to operating a wholesale business out of our Portland headquarters. We are proud to be part of an industry that supplies much of the wood needed to build and re-build communities across the United States and beyond and to be able to contribute to the health and vitality of Oregon's rural and urban communities.

I was born and raised on Oregon's Central Coast. My parents relocated to Oregon from the Midwest in the 1970s, attracted to the quality of life in the small coastal fishing and timber town they still call home. My family was never directly employed in the forest sector but we certainly benefited from the revenue and employment opportunities it created in our community. The year-round activity associated with growing, harvesting, milling, and transporting wood products was particularly important in the winter months when tourism inevitably lagged and service sector jobs were curtailed. The forest sector helped ensure the economy and social fabric in my hometown was diverse and resilient.

Working forests provide not only jobs, but *good*, family-wage jobs that in my youth sustained many of my friends and classmates. This is something that should not be taken for granted. But I think this Board is well-aware of this fact. You have ample data that speaks to the economic benefits of working forests. Perhaps what you hear less about is the culture that surrounds this industry, created through decades of work (often spanning generations) toward a common purpose and a shared respect for the surrounding land and all it provides. Within forest-dependent communities is a culture that honors hard work, practical 'know-how', problem-solving, and independence. It's a culture that takes pride in the years it takes to develop an understanding of the land and the work. It's a community that sets high expectations for itself and values integrity, candor, precision, efficiency, and prudence - all characteristics that help keep the land sustainable and people safe at end of each day. And it's a culture that places enormous value on being good neighbors and good stewards of the land.

While I now live in Portland, I'm proud to remain connected to this culture through my work at Hampton. Our company creates jobs but we also engage with and support our communities in other ways. We sponsor dozens of youth programs, from little league teams to robotics clubs. We support programs that help families in need. We partner with local community colleges and trade schools and volunteer our time and expertise to enhance educational programs. We provide on-the-job training and

apprenticeships to build a more skilled local workforce. And we are not alone in this. As I look across our industry I see similar footprints from forest products companies across the state. This engagement—this value—isn't easily quantifiable but it helps create a quality of life that ensures communities like the one I grew up continue to be places where people want to live and raise a family.

To continue to contribute to the quality of life in forest-dependent communities, our sector needs support from our local and state government leaders. We need continued investments in science and technology and career and technical education. We need a stable regulatory framework and a sustainable supply of raw materials to produce logs for sawmills and reliable work for family-owned businesses in logging, trucking, and related industries. And we need our leaders to dig deep to understand the complex and unique needs of realities of this sector—what it takes to keep it alive and thriving—and to acknowledge that while one of Oregon's oldest sectors, we are an industry and a culture well-suited to Oregon's modern environmental and economic goals that deserves to be supported, sustained, and respected.

Thank for your time and for the work you do for Oregon's forest communities.