



Compared to Willamette Valley counties, for example, southwest Oregon counties have significantly lower assessed property values, lower average wages, and higher poverty levels. In southwest Oregon, rates of child, spousal and drug abuse, and enrollment in free and reduced school lunches are amongst the highest in the state.

Additionally, federal lands managers are ramping up use of stewardship and good neighbor authority programs. While these are important tools to reduce fuels on federal lands, counties are cut out of revenue distribution. Understandably, this departure from the traditional revenue sharing relationship is making counties nervous.

Counties want to be at the table as you deliberate toward decisions on the Marbled Murrelet. Oregon's counties are heartened by ORS 527.630 (3) that reads, "To encourage forest practices implementing the policy of ORS 527.610 (the Oregon Forest Practices Act) to 527.770 (good faith compliance with best management practices), it is declared to be in the public interest to vest in the State Board of Forestry exclusive authority to develop and enforce statewide and regional rules pursuant to ORS 527.710 (the duties of the BOF) and to coordinate with other state agencies and local governments which are concerned with the forest environment.

As we move through these discussions, please consider potential impacts to county owned land that is managed under the Forest Practices Act. Please consider the consequences to counties of taking more land out of the harvest base. Diminishing yet another county revenue producer will have very real impacts, especially in southwest Oregon.

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

Sincerely,



Craig Pope  
Commissioner, Polk County  
President, Association of Oregon Counties