



**Federal Forest "Dangerous Ratio" – A Connection to ODF's Proposed Agency Fire Initiative**  
Comment by Rex Storm, Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.  
before the Oregon Board of Forestry – April 25, 2018

Chair Imeson and Board members, my name is Rex Storm, Certified Forester and Forest Policy Manager for Associated Oregon Loggers (AOL). I make these comments on behalf of the 1,000+ AOL member companies, representing Oregon logging and allied forest management businesses — those family businesses who grow, harvest, protect, and own forestlands statewide. We manage forests across Oregon, both private and public, and our experience with unhealthy federal forests in recent years is very troubling.

**Today, I want to show the Board a connection between the Department's proposed Fiscal 2019-21 "Agency Fire Initiative" and the "dangerous ratio" existing on Oregon's national forests. I attach a 1-page bar chart that illustrates this "dangerous ratio", titled — *Annual Growth, Mortality, and Harvest on US National Forest Timberlands, 1952-2016*.**

I refer to this chart as a "dangerous ratio," because the forest mortality and growth are so terribly out-of-balance:

- This ratio is not sustainable economically or ecologically
- Growth has steadily declined since 1996 – and could approach zero in the future
- Mortality has steeply escalated – it's already destructive
- Mortality now exceeds growth – for the first time since 1950
- Harvest has been flat for over a decade – or, in Oregon sawlog harvest has actually declined on national forests
- There is a lack of needed active management on overcrowded, unhealthy national forests-making this dangerous ratio even worse in the future

Upon seeing this chart, you may be pondering the question, 'Should Oregon taxpayers and forest landowners pay for the price of this federal forest "dangerous ratio"?' Oregon's national forest condition mimics this nationwide dangerous ratio. The Department's firefighting and protection costs are made higher because of this "dangerous ratio" in Oregon's 11 national forests. You heard earlier today from Doug Grafe about ODF's Fiscal 2019-21 "Agency Fire Initiative" proposal. This Initiative is necessarily larger to protect Oregonians from the federal forest dangerous ratio.

We hear much rhetoric about US Forest Service "increased pace and scale of management", attempting to address this dangerous ratio. Unfortunately, such an increase cannot occur unless the current debacle of conflicting USFS administrative policies, practices and culture are reformed.

This dangerous ratio of steeply rising mortality poses threats of concern to the Board:

- It threatens all Oregon forestlands: private and public
- The mortality is destructive: it translates to federal wildfires, pests and dead trees
- National forest mortality threatens non-federal neighbors, it transcends *all* forestlands
- Federal wildfires impact private forestlands that the Department of Forestry protects

Today, Regional Forester Pena stated several Forest Service priorities. It is troubling that no priority was indicated for reform of the USFS administrative policies and inefficiencies that hobble those treatments necessary to address the rising mortality. It is troubling that the USFS cannot effectively address the urgently needed course-correction to attack this dangerous ratio. Such correction would require wholesale reforms of USFS administrative policies and inefficiencies.

While several USFS “modernization initiatives” have begun, more work is needed by all of us! The Forest Service Chief has asked that the agency engage its partners in its work ahead. We are some of those vital partners: ODF, the Board, Oregon’s forest sector, and Oregon county governments. We are, and must become, a greater part of the solution to this dangerous ratio.

Oregon taxpayers and landowners should not pay the price of this dangerous ratio. Yet, ODF’s proposed ‘Agency Initiative’ has necessarily become larger because of the federal dangerous ratio.

I urge the Board’s due diligence in the work ahead toward both USFS modernization and the Agency Initiative. Thank you for your consideration.

# Annual Net Growth, Mortality, and Harvest on National Forest Timberlands - 1952-2016

