

Hello, Members of the Forestry Board.

If the various forestry practices of the Pacific Northwest were the rooms of a house, Washington State would be the living room, where the timber industry is expected to behave as guests, adhering to strict no-cut riparian buffers around even the smallest streams to keep downslope fish habitat and drinking water healthy, and nailing up mandatory postings to warn the public of any upcoming aerial pesticide spraying.

Oregon, by comparison, is a trip down the hall to the bathroom, where timber behemoths go to relieve themselves of burdensome riparian buffers and proper public notification. They wash their hands of the critical environmental responsibilities they've agreed to undertake further north. The toilet would be just above my house in Wheeler, where a massive slope listed by the USGS as a significant slide risk has been clear-cut to the ridge-line. Come take a hike with me. Small perennial and seasonal streams have been overtopped with no buffer whatsoever, because they are not required in this state to leave one. Either water doesn't run downhill in Oregon, or we just don't care for our fish habitat and drinking water as much as our neighbors do.

After every significant winter rain, the people of Wheeler watch the Nehalem River turn chocolate brown for days at a time, carrying away the loose soils left bare on the steep hillsides. Come spring, we listen for the spray-copters, because there are no public pesticide notices. Folks in some communities have been screened to find they've got 2,4-D in their urine.

Why do Oregonians have to live in the bathroom? Aren't we the same Americans as our friends in Washington? In California? In Idaho? If you type in [earthengine.google.com/timelapse/](http://earthengine.google.com/timelapse/) you can watch 30 heartbreaking years of clearcuts burst across the coast range with ever-increasing ferocity; the land looking more and more like a person with a terminally debilitating disease. Widespread clear-cutting is now the number one atmospheric carbon producer in the State of Oregon. We can do better.

The Board of Forestry has the opportunity to truly move our state forward. We need proud, sustainable silviculture that engages in habitat conservation, establishes more long term, old-growth reserves like the jewel of Oswald West which draw visitors to our state, diversify our forest revenue, and benefit our changing climate. When my son was four, he rode on my shoulders down among the massive trees of Oswald and saw the sun glittering through the branches. "Dad", he said, "It looks like it's raining diamonds." He didn't mean timber revenue. How we value our woods will dictate how we care for them. And we need good-neighbor practices, where no-one is labeled a member of the "fringe" because they object to breathing 2,4-D. There's something fundamentally un-American about being told what to breathe.

Our state could truly move up to a leadership position. There's no time like the present. Thank you for listening.

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