

Thank you to everyone who has weighed in on the very important matter of the Clatsop State Forest, and the Linn County lawsuit, which claims that the state must manage our state forests to maximize timber harvest.

The overwhelming message from public testimony has been in favor of balanced forest management and against the Linn County lawsuit.

I also am in favor of opting out of the Linn County lawsuit. These are my reasons.

Clatsop County has been repeatedly on record in support of balanced management of state forests and against an industrial emphasis over all other values. While I strongly support substantial and reliable timber harvests in our state forests, I do not support timber harvest over all other values.

Instead, I support the integrated and multi-benefit approach to Greatest Permanent Value that the Board of Forestry adopted in 1998. That has been the position of Clatsop County since 1998, and it should be the same position today. I want a strong recreation program on our state forests. I want our salmon streams protected and restored. I want alternatives to pesticides explored. I want diverse habitats for our hunters. I want special areas permanently protected. I do not want timber harvest levels to trump all these values.

There are great risks in prioritizing timber harvest over all other values on public lands. If we cut too much, we not only damage the environment, but we also risk lawsuits that could dramatically restrict or even close down harvest. Anyone who watched what has happened on federal lands should see that risk.

The Department of Forestry and Board of Forestry have difficult jobs finding balanced management and integrating these multiple values. But they have generally done a good job over the years. And harvests have been high since the 1998 rule; they did *not* go down because of multi-value management, as Linn County claims.

Rather than attacking the Board of Forestry through lawsuits that could pay two hundred million in taxpayer dollars to private lawyers, we should work together and forge a common path. Manufacturing a perception of a crisis and promoting the idea of an urban and rural divide serves none of us.

Some have spoken of our need to have a “seat at the table” because then our voice would be heard. But this makes little sense to me. Clatsop County’s values are not the values expressed in the lawsuit. Why would we join a lawsuit that demands maximum timber harvest over all other interests if we don’t support that position?

To make our voice heard, we need to clearly and decisively state that we support the Board of Forestry's current vision of Greatest Permanent Value.

Clatsop County and Oregon are beautiful. I love our home. This lawsuit is not only contrary to our values but it also contains the potential to damage our fish, our forests, clean water and the legacy of balanced management we owe to future generations..

Oregon has a proud history of working together to find solutions. We need to stick to the Oregon Way, which is solutions and not standoffs.

Scott Lee