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Senator Wyden Pushes Flawed O&C Solution Forward through Senate Committee Markup
Legislation is Unanimously Opposed by Oregon's Forest Products Industry, Opposed by the O&C Counties, and Lacks Support from Reps. DeFazio, Schrader, and Walden and Governor Kitzhaber

Groups representing Western Oregon's timber industry have [sent a letter to the Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee](#) outlining their opposition to the latest version of Senator Wyden's flawed O&C legislation (S. 1784), which was approved by the Committee today. The letter outlines how the latest version of the Wyden O&C proposal fails to restore sustainable harvest levels and corresponding timber revenues to county governments, or provide a solution to the environmental litigation that has crippled Western Oregon's rural, forested communities. In fact, Wyden's legislation would tip the scales further in the opposite direction, making the situation worse.

"S. 1784 does not provide increased certainty against the lawsuits, conflicting regulations, and the never-ending procedural maze of federal environmental laws that are the root cause of the BLM's inability to manage 2 million acres of O&C lands. Instead, the legislation permanently bars timber management on a large majority of these lands, subjects the remaining acreage to additional administrative burdens for the BLM without corresponding funding, and provides additional avenues for litigation. It is no wonder the environmental activists that have made it their singular mission to block timber harvest on these lands now support this latest version of S. 1784."

Following months of promises to work in good faith with Oregon's bipartisan House delegation and Governor Kitzhaber to craft a balanced, compromise O&C solution for Western Oregon's rural communities and forest products companies, Senator Wyden is moving with a proposal solely supported by environmental special interest groups in Portland and Washington, DC. [Congressman Peter DeFazio's office issued a statement](#) yesterday making it clear that he could not support the Wyden bill. [In recent comments sent to Senator Wyden by the 11-member board of the Association of O&C Counties](#), the rural counties most affected by the legislation also outlined their opposition to the legislation and requested that the Senator not move forward with the markup. They wrote:

"A markup of the bill in its current form would not, in our opinion, be constructive, and in fact may lead to a hardening of positions that would interfere with the ability of some stakeholders to participate in the work necessary to move ahead towards a successful conclusion when time permits."

Senator Wyden is citing a letter he received yesterday from the BLM to substantiate claims that the legislation would more than double current harvest levels. Until the assumptions and underlying analysis performed by the BLM are released to the public it is impossible to directly respond to these

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claims. There are serious questions about the objectivity and independence of any analysis performed by an administrative agency at the direction of the Senator's office and leading proponents of the legislation. Unfortunately, Senator Wyden's office rejected [numerous requests](#) to subject his legislation to an independent, objective, and transparent analysis similar to that performed for the bipartisan House O&C proposal by Governor John Kitzhaber's O&C task force.

"Claims that the legislation would increase timber harvest levels just don't square with the facts. S. 1784 permanently puts an overwhelming majority of the lands off-limits to harvest, fails to address the many barriers to timber sales that exist today, and mandates "ecological forestry" principles, which are unsustainable. The estimate also fails to outline the geographic distribution of timber harvests, which is critical to understanding whether adequate harvests will be generated in hard-hit Southwest Oregon's drier forest types."

Earlier this week the [American Forest Resource Council \(AFRC\) sent a letter Senator Wyden's office](#) urging that the bill not be marked up and expressing a desire to continue working with the Senator to find a balanced solution. The joint industry letter outlined a similar commitment.

"Our organizations remain supportive of efforts to find a balanced, effective compromise for the management of the BLM O&C lands. Any compromise proposal must substantially increase sustainable timber harvest levels and timber revenues for local governments, avoid harming private land management, and provide equal levels of legal certainty for conservation areas and timber management areas."

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