

The Oregonian

Groups appeal clearcutting decision on Oregon's Tillamook and Clatsop state forests

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by Staff Reporters, The Oregonian

The Oregon Chapter of the [Sierra Club](#), joined by fishing and wildlife groups, announced Friday they have formally asked the Oregon Board of Forestry to reverse its decision to increase clear cutting on the [Tillamook](#) and [Clatsop](#) State Forests.

The board on June 3 voted to make 70 percent of the two state forests open to clear cutting. Previously, 50 percent of the forests could be cut in that manner. Environmental groups maintain that the decision could harm thousands of acres of diverse, native forests, which are rare in the North Coast range, including up to 70 percent of some key salmon "anchor" watersheds.

While the law requires that the Board's decision result in a high probability of maintaining and restoring aquatic habitat, state scientists found that the proposal had a low probability of keeping many key salmon basins on a positive trajectory, according to the Sierra Club.

Bob Van Dyk of the Wild Salmon Center said in a news release, "The Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan sets achievable goals to restore aquatic habitat. However, much like the failed Western Oregon Plan Revisions proposed by the Bush Administration, the Board of Forestry chose politics over science and ignored the legal requirements for ensuring the recovery of native fish and wildlife."

The groups' petition also charges the board violated its own rules regarding transparency and openness at its recent meeting to discuss the decision, failing to disclose letters of opposition at a hearing and allowing only 30 minutes of testimony.

"The Board of Forestry showed its allegiance to the timber industry by steamrolling over the public, ignoring the best available science, and making a political decision to prioritize timber production rather than looking out for best interests of our state forests and the public who owns them," Sierra Club volunteer Donald Fontenot said in the news release.

Joining the Sierra Club in the petition are the Northwest Guides and Anglers Association, Pacific Rivers Council, Wild Salmon Center, the Association of Northwest Steelheaders, Coast Range Association, Native Fish Society and the Center for Biological Diversity.

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