

## Testimony

Presented by  
Al Thayer

Before the Oregon Board of Forestry  
November 7, 2008

Good Afternoon. My name is Al Thayer. I want to thank this Board for the opportunity to share my perspective about an important issue to me, as well as many small family woodland owners across Oregon – the regulatory treatment of intensively managed hybrid poplar plantations.

Today, I will present my personal views, as well as the positions of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, of which I am a member.

First, Oregon Small Woodlands Association and I support the Department of Forestry's recommendation to you as described in Alternative C, with a specific modification. We request that the words "modify or waive" be included in Alternative C.

Oregon Small Woodlands Association actively worked during the 2007 Session to establish the task force and then fully participated in the development of consensus legislation introduced in 2008. Legislation adopted in February of this year provided the State Board of Forestry the authority to "modify or waive" limitations and requirements of certain FPA statutes. As written, Alternative C lists only a waiver option. We support the statutory phrase of "modify or waive" and believe it should be included in Alternative C.

Oregon Small Woodlands Association and I are very concerned about the extent and duration of the relief provided to hardwood plantation growers in the state; especially those that are growing saw timber that will compete in the marketplace with hardwoods grown and harvested under the full regulatory and harvest tax requirements. This creates an unlevel playing field for small family woodland owners in the marketplace.

Since 1991, we have seen exceptions to the state's regulatory requirements broaden substantially for intensively managed hardwood stands. Over the years, OSWA and I have reluctantly gone along with these incremental changes. Each change on its own was not too impactful; however, collectively the changes are substantial and are now disadvantaging small family woodland owners in the marketplace.

In today's world, we want fair and equal access to markets, and those that receive regulatory and tax relief for competing wood products have a clear advantage.

It is in the interest of this Board and the citizens of Oregon to maintain a regulatory and tax climate that is conducive to maintaining forest ownership by families as a thriving

part of the Oregon landscape. There are many threats to this future, including regulatory and tax burdens.

We believe that family forest ownership offers many benefits to the citizens of our state. The management of these woodlands is as diverse as the families that own them. This creates a mosaic of diversity across the landscape and offers a variety of goods and services, many at no cost to the public. For example, our lands offer diverse wildlife habitat, water storage and protection, forest and non-forest products, and even the storage of carbon – that many families look forward to selling in the market place through a new company set up by OSWA, the Woodlands Carbon Company.

Thank you for your serious consideration of our suggestion. With a spirit of cooperative partnership, I commit to you that OSWA will continue to work with the Department and stakeholders on this issue during the next step of drafting administrative rules.

Let me close with a personal thought, so from this point forward these are solely my views, not the policy position of OSWA.

Growing trees in the eastern Oregon desert is simply not good public policy. Let me explain my reasons.

Water and air are our most precious resources. Global Warming puts added demand on our limited supply of water. California has eyed the Columbia River as a potential future supply of water. According to the Sunday Oregonian (2 Nov. 2008: A2), California will cut back water deliveries. Low reservoirs mean that only 15% of requests are likely to be filled this year. Using tremendous amounts of water to grow Cottonwood in the desert sends the wrong message to our neighbors and the rest of the world. Cottonwood is a low value, non-native species, which fills no special need in the market.

Fortunately, nature has provided a “green” alternative. Red Alder is a native species. It will grow almost anywhere in western Oregon and Washington without additional water, electricity, fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides. Mills and infrastructure already exist to utilize alder. Harvest taxes are paid to the state. Nature’s “green wood” is even far more valuable than the transplanted Cottonwood.

How is it that I am familiar with the Cottonwood project? I was responsible for a similar program for a different company. We planted the first trees on the Boardman property as part of a scientific test. The water, electricity (to power water pumps), fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides required quickly demonstrated this was both an environmental and economic disaster 23 years ago.

Quite simply, Oregon cannot afford desert tree farms.

Thank you and I look forward to answering your questions.

# Sunday Oregonian

PORTLAND, OREGON

NOVEMBER 2, 2008

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## California will cut back water deliveries

**Water supply** | Low reservoirs mean only 15 percent of requests are likely to be filled

By SAMANTHA YOUNG  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California plans to cut water deliveries to their second-lowest level ever next year, raising the prospects of rationing for cities and of less planting by farmers.

The Department of Water Resources projects that it will deliver just 15 percent of the amount that local water agencies throughout California request every year.

Since the first State Water Project deliveries were made in 1962, the only time less water was promised was in 1993, but heavy precipitation that year ultimately allowed agencies to receive their full requests.

The reservoirs that are most crucial to the state's water deliv-

ery system are at their lowest levels since 1977, after two years of dry weather and court-ordered restrictions on water pumping out of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This year, water agencies received just 35 percent of the water they requested.

Farmers in the Central Valley say they'll be forced to fallow fields, while cities from the San Francisco Bay area to San Diego might have to require residents to ration water.

Jim Beck, general manager of the Kern County Water Agency, said fewer plantings would yield fewer crops and a decrease in the number of farm hands hired.

"We're seeing a phenomenon in the Central Valley where growers who have been in the business of agriculture are laying off workers who have been with them for 20 or 30 years because they don't have the water," Beck said. "It's one thing to see brown lawns and shorter showers in urban areas. The real impact in the Central Valley is people are having to find new jobs."

In Southern California, the Metropolitan Water District — the agency that supplies water to about half the state's population — has depleted more than a third of its water reserves. The agency's general manager, Jeff Kightlinger, said last week Californians must immediately reduce their water use to stretch what little water is available.

"We are preparing for the very real possibility of water shortages and rationing throughout the region in 2009," Kightlinger said, adding that his board will consider rationing during its meeting next month.

The State Water Project delivers water to more than 25 million residents and 750,000 acres of farmland.

In 2006, water agencies received their full allotment, in part because of heavy rains and a thick Sierra snowpack. But last year, a federal court limited water pumping out of the delta to protect the threatened delta smelt.

A wet and snowy winter could

mean cities and farms get more water, said Ted Thomas, a spokesman for the state water department. But that wouldn't affect the court order.

"We are anticipating drastically reduced water supplies, regardless of weather conditions," Laura King Moon, assistant general manager of the State Water Contractors, said in a statement.

Department of Water Resources Director Lester Snow said the outlook underscores the governor's call to retool California's water storage and delivery system.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger favors building more dams and designing a new way to funnel water through or around the environmentally fragile delta. The proposals have failed to gain traction in the Legislature.

Schwarzenegger this year called on water agencies to voluntarily cut water use 20 percent by 2020. He stopped short of issuing a mandatory conservation order, a strategy yet to be used by the state, Snow said.

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