

Subject: Please hold public town halls and oppose expanded logging on Oregon's public lands

Dear Representative Hoyle,

I am writing as an Oregonian deeply concerned about the converging threats to Oregon's public forests, including the Northwest Forest Plan revisions, the BLM Western Oregon Resource Management Plan revisions, the rollback of the Roadless Rule, and H.R. 7603, the O&C Renewal Act of 2026.

These proposals would significantly expand logging, weaken environmental protections, and reduce meaningful public input at the very moment when Oregonians should have more say over the future of our forests, watersheds, climate resilience, and rural economies.

I appreciate that you joined other Oregon delegation members in calling on BLM to extend the public comment period for the Western Oregon plan revisions. That was important, but given the scale of what is being proposed for Oregon, **it is not enough**. Please take a much more visible leadership role by holding public town halls in our district focused specifically on these forest policy changes and their impacts on Oregon communities.

The public deserves a direct opportunity to ask questions, hear from scientists and affected communities, and understand the consequences of these proposals before decisions are made. The Roadless Rule itself was adopted after years of public process, including hundreds of meetings and more than a million public comments. A rollback of that magnitude should not move forward without robust public engagement.

Oregon's forests are an essential climate asset. They store approximately 3.2 billion metric tons of carbon across public and private forestlands. Once mature and old-growth carbon reserves are diminished, they cannot be quickly restored. Regrowth to harvestable size can take decades, and old-growth characteristics can take centuries to recover. Increasing logging at the levels being discussed risks reducing carbon sequestration and increasing emissions at a time when climate change is already intensifying drought, wildfire, flooding, extreme storms, and sea-level rise.

Expanded logging and associated road building would have serious local impacts. In Lane County and across Western Oregon, these activities can increase landslide risks, sedimentation, post-harvest herbicide use near watersheds, loss of streamside shade, reduced summer flows, degraded fish habitat, and threats to drinking water quality. These are not abstract harms, they affect public health, public safety, recreation, local economies, and quality of life.

Supporters of increased logging often claim that these proposals are necessary for jobs and county revenue. But those claims are short-sighted and overstated. Logging is an extractive industry dependent on trees that take decades to regrow. Increasing harvest beyond sustainable levels may create a temporary boost, but it risks depleting the mature timber base and undermining long-term economic stability. Since the 1990s, mechanization and mill automation have also reduced the number of workers needed per unit of harvest, meaning that increased logging today will not produce the same job gains it once might have.

Meanwhile, Oregon's forests support a much broader and more durable economy: clean drinking water, fisheries, hunting, hiking, camping, foraging, and recreation tourism. All of our communities benefit from the trees, clean water and air that makes Oregon livable and economically attractive.

I urge you to:

1. Hold public town halls in our district on the Northwest Forest Plan revisions, BLM Western Oregon plan revisions, the Roadless Rule rollback, and H.R. 7603.
2. Oppose H.R. 7603 and any legislation that prioritizes timber production over watershed protection, climate stability, biodiversity, and public input.
3. Publicly oppose efforts to rescind or weaken the Roadless Rule. Rescinding the Roadless Rule would increase wildfire risk and impose expensive long-term road maintenance costs. Wildfire ignition density is highest near roads, including within 50 meters of roads, and roughly 90% of wildfires start within half a mile of a road. More roads mean more human-caused ignition risk, more fragmentation, and more public expense.
4. Support protective legislation such as S.2042, the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2025, and encourage companion action in the House.
5. Demand that federal agencies provide a full, transparent, science-based public process before approving expanded logging on Oregon's public lands.

Oregon's forests are far more valuable as living forests than as a short-term increase in timber production. Please use your position to ensure that Oregonians are heard and that these forests are protected for present and future generations.

Sincerely,

Christina Shew

Cottage Grove, Oregon

