

## **IT'S TIME FOR ACTION ON NEW FORESTRY LAWS**

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Over forty people were poisoned in 2013 by multiple illegal sprayings of their homes - not forest lands - with aerial forestry herbicides in Curry County, Oregon. One is dead, one in intensive treatment, the rest with serious ongoing health issues. It took seven months to get any Oregon government agency to even release what poisons they were sprayed with. There's something very wrong here.

One man told us that his nearby neighbors have buried 12 deer, 2 sheep, and several dogs that died from a "wasting disease". [They could eat all they wanted, but couldn't absorb the food, shrank to skin and bones, and died.] He sighed, then added, "And I have the same wasting disease. I've lost 45 pounds, can't work, and need a cane just to get down our stairs."

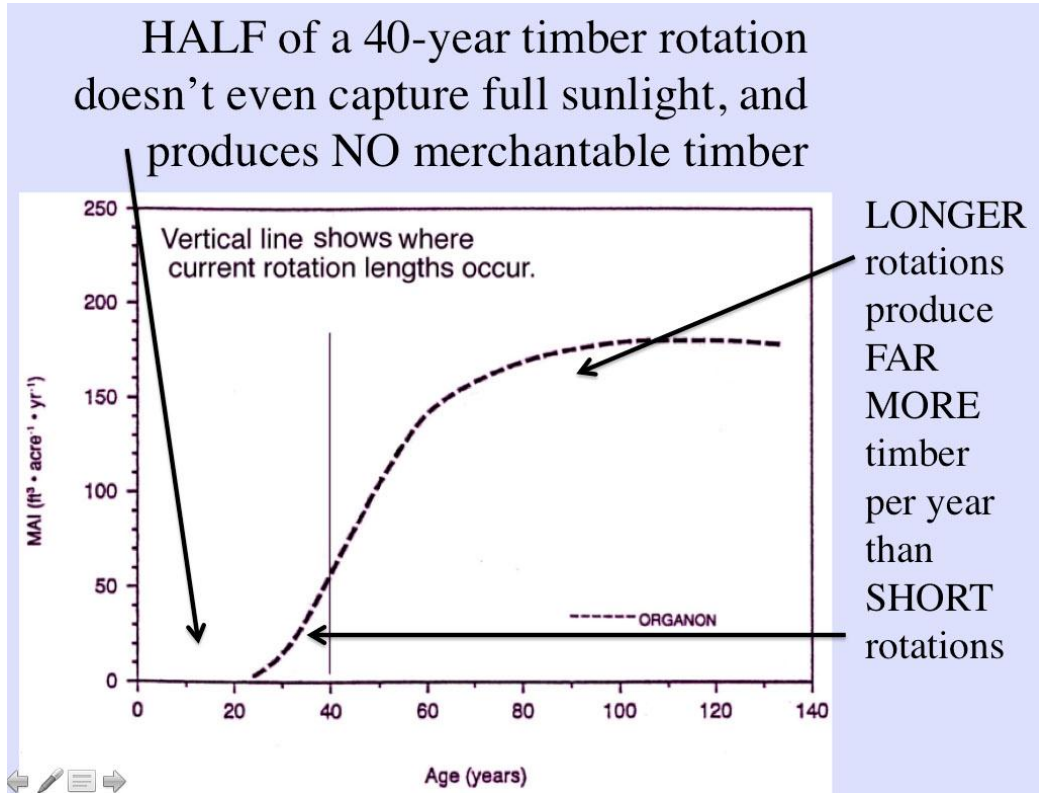
A year later, no fines collected, no financial assistance for medical costs or inability to work, and local doctors refusing to treat them. And Oregon's "Right to Farm and Forest" law deprives Oregonians of our constitutional right to any legal action against timber companies in such situations. This was not just one single event. Other spraying issues have occurred at Triangle Lake, at Tiller in Douglas County, above the city of Wheeler, and poisoning of waterways and public water supplies in many locations. It's time for change.

Oregon allows use of dangerous herbicides banned elsewhere. It has eliminated even minimal spray setbacks from homes and schools. And there is no evidence that routine use of aerial forestry herbicide spraying is even needed. It actually reduces tree growth. Numerous, more affordable alternatives exist. Oregon has a number of sustainable timber harvest companies that use NO herbicides. Simply changing rotation length from the current 40 years to 300 years reduces herbicide "need" as well as other significant costs of timber harvesting by 85%. And at the same time, long rotations produce *10 times* the net income per year. It's time for change.

We know now also that there is no minimum safe level of herbicide use - extremely low levels cause neurological damage that can even affect future generations. Oregon allows the use of herbicide mixes whose cross-impacts have never been tested. National forests have banned aerial herbicides because of significant health issues in surrounding areas. But not Oregon. It's time for change.

Oregon ignores that the short harvest-rotations it permits, and the routine use of herbicides it allows, cut wood production in half, economic benefit of forests by 90%, causes siltation of streams and reduced salmon runs, and creates significant landslide hazards to surrounding communities. It allows slash-burning that is now virtually banned elsewhere, permitting its mutagenic and carcinogenic smoke to engulf our communities and the air we breathe. It's time for change.

Here, in one image, is the core of our forestry problem, and its solution:



Timber companies have no problem making a profit in other states. They just rake in big extra profit from Oregon's outdated laws. Oregon has eliminated most harvest taxes - Washington's equivalent would provide \$40 million/year to local affected counties. The past employment and income benefits from logging have dwindled to near zero. Automation and wage reductions in forestry industry have reduced timber benefits to less than 1% of Oregon GDP.

Tourism has replaced forestry in contribution to economics and employment - outdoor recreation providing five times the jobs as the timber industry. Global warming impacts say it's time for change - carbon sequestering value alone, from letting trees grow, amounts to 20 times the income gained from logging. EPA has disapproved Oregon forestry regulations and is cancelling funding to the state.

It's time for major reform in Oregon forestry regulations. Now. Current proposed legislative action to "notify people of spraying" is totally inadequate. It merely shifts our attention away from the enormity and seriousness of the issues. The magnitude and clarity of new science regarding these issues is already bringing strong class-action risk to all of our jurisdictions and agencies if we fail to act. And the benefit to all Oregon of making major improvements in management of our forests is huge.

## **FORESTRY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS NEEDED:**

- 1. Restore forestry harvest taxes to levels equal to or above Washington, to provide income to affected local jurisdictions.**
- 2. Prohibit all routine use of herbicides in forestry and along roadways.**
- 3. Ban slashburns, encourage biomass options.**
- 4. Separate enforcement of Oregon forestry laws from state agencies that administer them.**
- 5. Repeal portions of Right to Farm and Forest Act that prevent legal action against corporate forestry.**
- 6. Ensure restitution to people poisoned in Curry County (and elsewhere) by forestry pesticide spraying.**
- 7. Increase required minimum rotations of all Oregon forests to 300 years.**
- 8. Prohibit clearcuts where potential exists for landslides affecting our homes, communities, highways.**

For details and hotlinked sources, see:

[http://www.tombender.org/societyworthlivingforarticles/TIME TO CHANGE OREGON FORESTRY.pdf](http://www.tombender.org/societyworthlivingforarticles/TIME_TO_CHANGE_OREGON_FORESTRY.pdf)

*Tom Bender has been an architect and economist, historian, Building Official of Cannon Beach, energy consultant to Gov. Tom McCall's office, and one of the founders of the green architecture and sustainability movements. The "Factor-10 Economics" he developed in the 1970s has repeatedly been proven to achieve order-of-magnitude improvements in effectiveness and sustainability. Austria, the Netherlands, and Norway have publicly committed to the principles, which have been endorsed by the European Union as the new paradigm for sustainable development. The OECD environmental ministers have urged the adoption of Factor Ten goals, as have the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and United Nations Environmental Program.*