

Council on Forestry - Conference call

December 7, 2015, 2:30pm

Subject: Council testimony for hearings on forestry legislation

Attendees: Henry Schienebeck, Jane Severt, Paul DeLong, Tom Hittle, Kim Quast, Bruce Allison, Matt Dallman, Jim Hoppe, Richard Wedepohl, Tyler Wenzlaff, Earl Gustafson, Cory Bruce, Rep. Mursau, Jim Kerkman, Paul Heinen, Rebecca Diebel

Notes:

Jane Severt, Tom Hittle and Henry Schienebeck drafted testimony on proposed legislation AB561 for the Council to review.

The testimony will be sent to the Council's interested parties distribution list and then when the Department finalizes their testimony, Paul will distribute that. Several stakeholders have sent Paul comments on the legislation and that will be distributed to Council members, as requested.

The Council's testimony will be for information only; it is not a statement of support for or against. At the last Council meeting it was decided that the testimony would stay at a broad level, reflecting the concepts in the Council's 2013 MFL report.

Discussion on whether or not the bill reduces MFL DNR administration costs and law complexity. DNR estimate is that some measures will reduce, whereas others will increase the complexity.

Concern by several members that the Council's report on a package of recommended revisions to the MFL law is not reflected in the bill.

Motion by Tom Hittle, seconded by Kim Quast to amend the testimony by striking the second to last paragraph that contains the sentence: "We believe the proposed legislation incorporates the Council's goals for revising the MFL including..." It was felt that this would remove the endorsement of the bill but still endorse the MFL and it keeps the focus on the Council's MFL recommendations. A friendly amendment was made to the motion to reference and attach the Council's MFL report. Motion passed (8 yes and 3 abstain).

AB559 was discussed and Richard Wedepohl made a motion to include a statement of support for the bill in the testimony. The motion was seconded by Tom Hittle. Discussion on the motion included providing information on how the leasing recommendation by the Council was part of a package and not a standalone. Also, AB559 was made a separate bill because it is highly contentious and there was the risk that if it was included in AB561 it could derail that bill completely. The motion was withdrawn and a new motion made by Richard Wedepohl, seconded by Tom Hittle to add a statement to the testimony that lifting the leasing ban was one of the recommendations agreed to as one element of a total package contained in the Council's report. The Council's final MFL report from June 2013 will also be included with testimony on AB559. Motion passed (7 yes, 1 no, 3 abstain).