

Good morning. I am honored to be here today and to have the opportunity to discuss with you H.R. 4200, the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act.

I am Oregon State Senator Charlie Ringo. I represent Northwest Portland and parts of Washington County.

I am here today because of work I did earlier this year investigating the state of academic integrity at Oregon State University's College of Forestry. This became an issue because of the scandal that occurred concerning how the leadership of the College of Forestry reacted to the publication in Science magazine of a paper by several graduate students. That study is often referred to as the Donato paper, after its lead author, Daniel Donato.

This issue is relevant to the business before this Committee today because you have got to be able to trust the science that is offered to support the proposed legislation. You have got to know your policy decisions concerning how to manage post-fire recovery efforts are based on sound science, and that the scientific opinions are not somehow skewed. And that's particularly important when you have an issue like forest management, which is so laden with emotion and fraught with the power of special interests. You have to know that you are getting the straight, unvarnished science.

And I'm here to tell you that a large amount of evidence discovered in my investigation into OSU's College of Forestry indicates an overwhelming industry bias, and that this bias forces one to question the credibility of the scientific opinions offered by the College leadership in support of H.R. 4200.

Please allow me to explain.

When the prestigious journal Science accepted the Donato paper for publication, that should have been a cause for great celebration among the leadership of the College of Forestry. It was quite an accomplishment for those graduate students. But there was one problem: the conclusion of that paper was not convenient for those advocating for H.R. 4200, and in particular, it was not welcomed by the timber industry.

I obtained through a Freedom of Information Request a series of emails sent and received by Hal Salwasser, the Dean of the College of Forestry. These emails demonstrate that Dean Salwasser worked hand-and-glove with timber industry representatives to undermine the conclusions of the Donato paper. Dean Salwasser was not interested in advancing the best available science. Rather, his overwhelming concern was to help his allies in industry who suddenly had a problem.

I'd first like to show you an email that was sent from Luanne Lawrence, Vice President of University Advancement, to Dean Salwasser. The email is dated January 4, 2006. It gives Dean Salwasser a heads up that Science magazine is about to publish the Donato paper. Lawrence tells Salwasser "I am sure you will hear from your industry partners and any nemises we have in sustainability.

The next document I'd like to show you is an email string representing a series of

communications involving Dean Salwasser's efforts to do damage control by working with industry representatives to put the right "spin" on the Donato paper to minimize its potential impact on H.R. 4200.

During the hearing I will show you other emails that indicate a dominant timber bias on the part of the College of Forestry.

So what is the most credible, believable science? Well, please consider that when Professor John Sessions testified before the House committee in favor of H.R. 4200, he did so based on a paper that had not been through an independent peer review process. Nevertheless, the College of Forestry promoted his conclusions as based on proven science. In contrast, the Donato paper was peer reviewed by an independent body of scientists. In terms of credibility, the Donato paper stands far higher than the opinion of Dr. John Sessions.

I urge this committee to make decisions based on sound science. It's clear that the science coming from the leadership of the College of Forestry is simply too tainted to be given any credibility. This Committee should reject the current version of H.R. 4200.