



May 28, 2019

Rep. Nancy Nathanson  
900 Court St NE, H-276  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Re: Opposition to House Bill 2495**

Dear Representative Nathanson:

I request that this letter be entered into the public record and the information contained be considered in your discussion around HB 2495.

**For the record, I am extremely concerned about the potential damage that HB 2495 would have on the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and to the education of students in Oregon.**

As I finish my 18<sup>th</sup> year as superintendent of the Tillamook School District, I'm proud of the state-leading programs we have developed around Natural Resource education. We have made the commitment in Tillamook that every single student, every year will have multiple opportunities to get outside to learn about our surroundings. For many students, this is when the joy of learning finally engages and they discover their future. We made the decision to focus on natural resource education when we realized that many of our students had never even been to the ocean, let alone the forest or rivers, even though we live in Tillamook. You will probably not be surprised to hear that every one of the students who had previously missed out on these opportunities were students who live in poverty. It is our responsibility in schools to educate all student and to open the doors to their surroundings, and OFRI has helped us do that.

Tillamook's district-wide program was created and has developed because of very close partnerships and support of OFRI. They have become the statewide leader in K-12 education around natural resources, and without their on-going support the state of Oregon will change. As a life-long Oregonian, I'm concerned that our youth have a lack of knowledge about the outdoors, which is creating a lack of appreciation which could fundamentally change our state. We are extremely fortunate to have a resource like OFRI to help ensure that the future of Oregon is green.

Please carefully consider the value the OFRI brings to this state's education system, and please refrain from potentially taking money from this organization to fund other things.

Sincerely,

Randy Schild  
Superintendent