



Oregon Small Woodlands Association  
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May 28, 2019

From: Mike Barsotti,  
President Oregon Small Woodland Association  
TO: Members, House Committee on Revenue  
RE: Opposition to HB 2495 and amendments 1, 2, and 4

HB 2495 with its proposed amendment will:

- make current forest products harvest tax rates permanent,
- shift all wild fighting costs to forest landowners,
- and cripple the efforts of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute's to inform the public and students on Oregon Forest's; and educate us forest landowners on how to improve the stewardship of our forests.

There is no data to make these policies changes, and if this isn't enough reject these changes, this effort to make major changes in how the state funds wildfire suppression comes while the Governor's Wildfire Council with its subcommittees are engaged in a comprehensive study of wildfire preparedness, suppression and how best to deal with the aftermath of wildfire.

The Governor's Wildfire Council report with its findings and recommendation will be supported with extensive date. It will have policy actions where needed for the legislature to address. Even if this bill was sound public policy, which it is not, wouldn't it be best to wait for this report?

What is this bill trying to solve? Oregon landowners pay a greater share of wildfire preparedness and suppression than any state in the U.S. For example, in Washington and Idaho all large fire costs are paid by the general fund. In California and Alaska, 100% of all fire costs are paid through the general fund.

The ways Oregon funds wildfire suppression in Oregon is quite complex, but the basic strategy is that the public and landowners share 50/50 in both preparedness and suppression. This bill in its convoluted methodology will have landowners covering all costs through the establishment of a "Wildfire Suppression Fund" funded by forest landowners to cover wildfire costs before the use of general funds.

In 2018, Oregon's private forest landowners paid nearly \$29.5 million in fire protection and suppression costs. This figure does not include approximate \$14 million of in-kind contributions private forest landowners and forest product companies provide in heavy equipment, firefighting resources, the development of access to water on their lands, and training employees to fight fire side-by-side with the Oregon Dept. of Forestry in the complete and coordinated fire protection program.

Oregon current funding strategy is both fair and effective, and OFRI has a proven track record in educating Oregonian on forestry. Please reject all of HB 2495.