

Erin Isselmann, OFRI Executive Director

Good morning, Chair Nathanson and the members of the House Revenue Committee. My name is Erin Isselmann and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. I have served in this position since July 2018. OFRI provides a comprehensive set of programs to fulfill its mission to educate Oregonians about the state's forest and sustainable practices. At the foundation of OFRI's work is a regular cadence of research about Oregonians' Values and Beliefs related to our state's forests. We conduct an in-depth statewide survey every four years. This provides us with information to understand what Oregonians know about our forests and forest practices. It also helps us identify sources of information about Oregon's forest and forest practices, whether these sources are factually accurate, and pinpoints knowledge gaps that OFRI works to fill. Our survey work also reveals what the public values the most out of the state's forests as well as increases our understanding of the public's concerns regarding forestry in the state. We use this information to develop a public education program, which

is targeted to inform and advise all Oregonians about our forests and forest practices. Using this information, OFRI develops an annual television campaign across the state to help Oregonians better understand the contributions of Oregon's working forests to our watersheds, our natural habitats and the state's economy . In addition, we develop a comprehensive set of resources to help the public understand the role of the forest sector in the state. These include:

- Oregon Forest Facts biennial publication
- OregonForests.org website
- Forest Sector Economic Analysis in partnership with OSU and University of Idaho
- Research commissioned to take a look at the latest science in forestry
  - Trees to Tap
  - Wildfire
  - Forest Carbon

Our latest research from January has informed our current activities. As you are aware, many new residents have arrived in Oregon over the past five years. Our research indicates that many of these Oregonians strongly value the beauty and recreation opportunities of Oregon's forests and also value the economic impact of forestry. While forestry is one of the state's principal economic growth drivers, newer residents don't have extensive knowledge about forestry practices and protections. Our latest work addresses these knowledge gaps and helps to provide Oregonians with the latest facts on forestry in the state as well as the latest science behind our sustainable forestry practices.

In addition to our public education program, OFRI also provides a robust K-12 Education Program and one of the country's leading Landowner Education Program. OFRI dedicates over 25 percent of its annual budget to K-12. Our K-12 Program is led by a highly respected education professional (Norie Dimeo-Ediger) and we also have a natural resources educator on staff who manages our education program at the Oregon Garden in the

Rediscovery Forest. Finally, our Landowner Education program leader is a professional forester with a master's degree in Silviculture from Oregon State University. Mike Cloughesy also serves on the national board of the Society of American Foresters and was recently recognized as a distinguished alumnus by the Oregon State University College of Forestry.

Amendment four to House Bill 2495 seeks to divert 60 percent of OFRI's annual budget to the creation of a Wildfire Suppression Fund. Wildfire suppression and safe forest practices to avoid wildfires is a key part of our public, landowner and K-12 education efforts. The Oregon Forest Practices Act also mandates that landowners take strong actions to reduce the risk of wildfire and limit its impacts. OFRI's mission to educate students, landowners and the broader public about the Oregon Forest Practices Act plays a valuable role in protecting Oregon's forests from wildfires and other threats.