

JUN 08 2021



Andrea Salinas

To: Members of the House  
From: Representative Andrea Salinas  
Date: June 8, 2021

**RE: Support for HB 2357B – Reform OFRI (redirect funding).**

Dear Colleagues,

I urge you to vote YES on **HB 2357B**. This bill enjoys the support of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, and over 30 Organizations that comprise the Oregon Conservation Network, along with a broad group of educators, small woodlot owners, and a large portion of the Oregon public who are deeply concerned to learn about the Oregon Forest Resources Institute's (OFRI) track record of misleading the public and working behind the scenes to silence science critical of the logging industry.

I urge you to pass HB 2357B because the bill reforms the controversial and outdated OFRI by redirecting over half its current budget to fund critical scientifically sound forest work, small woodlot owners, and climate-smart forest management.

Recent investigative reporting from *OPB/Oregonian/ProPublica* has made clear the need to reform the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. For three decades, this quasi state agency has used tax dollars to undermine scientific research, lobby illegally against efforts to reform Oregon's forest policies, and mislead Oregonians about the effectiveness of our forest laws in protecting critical resources like clean water and wildlife habitat.

**Serious Problems at OFRI:**

- **OFRI has been lobbying illegally**—([Oregon law \(ORS 526.650\)](#) clearly prohibits OFRI from lobbying. Yet, OFRI has worked in recent years to lobby against climate change legislation that might impact the logging industry. They have also lobbied against potential regulation at the Board of Forestry to better protect clean water in forested streams.
- **OFRI has worked to silence scientific research**—After groundbreaking forest climate research conducted by faculty at Oregon State University's College of Forestry was published in the prestigious *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, OFRI executives lobbied legislators and university officials to convince them that the research was flawed. The study's author called it an attack on academic freedom.
- **OFRI executives sat in on a private briefing from a dark money group**—Public employees at OFRI participated in an election campaign briefing that featured political attack ads against Governor Brown from dark money group *Priority Oregon*.
- **OFRI's advertising misleads Oregonians**—As an arm for the logging industry, OFRI spends tax dollars to mislead Oregonians to believe that our logging laws are strong even in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary. Oregon's logging laws are the weakest on the

West Coast and communities that rely on healthy forests for their clean drinking water have been paying the price.

These revelations make clear the need for **HB 2357B**, which would reform OFRI and dedicate a significant amount of its current funding to more pressing forest needs.

**What Does HB 2357B Do and Where Will the Funds Go:**

1. The bill directs half of the harvest tax that currently goes to OFRI to a “Sound Forestry Practices” subaccount at the Department of Forestry to fulfill pressing, and chronically underfunded needs at the agency, specifically:
  - a. Support for climate science and climate smart forestry
  - b. Enhanced reporting and monitoring on the use of pesticides in forest operations
  - c. Adaptive management driven by research and amending forest practices over time to achieve sustainably managed forests
2. Directs additional 17% of the timber tax that goes to OFRI be dedicated to support the Committee for Family Forestlands so small woodlot owners will have needed funds to support understanding of forest practices rules and aid in practicing sustainable forestry
3. Reforms OFRI by prohibiting “generalized advertising for public education
4. Adds a conservation representative and a fish and wildlife expert to the OFRI board

Urgent action is needed this legislative session to reform this troubled agency to ensure scientifically based forest management, unbiased support for small woodlot owners, and climate-smart forest management. I hope you will join me in voting YES on **HB 2357B**.

Sincerely,

Andrea Salinas  
Oregon State Representative, House District 38

**OCN Member Organizations that Support Passing HB 2357B:**

1000 Friends of Oregon | Association of Oregon Recyclers | Audubon Society of Portland | Beyond Toxics | Cascadia Wildlands | Center for Biological Diversity | Central Oregon Landwatch | Climate Solutions | Engineers for a Sustainable Future | Defenders of Wildlife | The Environmental Center | Environment Oregon | Friends of Mount Hood | Friends of the Columbia Gorge | Friends of Mt. Hood | Greater Hells Canyon Council | League of Women Voters of Oregon | Native Fish Society | Neighbors for Clean Air | Oceana | Oregon Coast Alliance | Oregon Environmental Council | Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility | Oregon League of Conservation Voters | Oregon Natural Desert Association | Oregon Land and Water Alliance | Oregon Wild | Renewable Northwest | Rogue Riverkeeper | Trout Unlimited | Tualatin Riverkeepers | Rogue Valley Audubon Society | Sierra Club Oregon Chapter | The Street Trust | Surfrider Foundation | Umpqua Valley Audubon Society | WaterWatch of Oregon | Wild Salmon Center