

To Committee Chair Witt, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson and members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Theresa Hausser and I live in east Lane County. I offer this in support of what I hope will be (albeit brief) oral testimony on March 2 in opposition to HB 2357 and 2379.

Both of these bills seek to eliminate OFRI, which should eliminate them as viable bills. OFRI is a remarkable resource to woodland owners, and indeed, to anyone who loves the forest and wants to know it better.

My wife and I are still pretty new to owning our (now fire-ravaged) woodland, and much of the competence we are developing in caring for our woodland has roots in OFRI resources: OFRI publications, OFRI educational materials, OFRI educational partnerships. I came into woodland ownership determined that nobody could make me cut my trees. While Oregon Wild claims that OFRI exists to promote the logging industry, my experience of OFRI is that however much I might have wanted someone to tell me what to do with my woodland (other than cut some of my trees), nobody in the science-based woodland community did that—including any of OFRI's resources. A harvest or thin might be beneficial to the health of my woodland; they might further my management objectives; they might give a logging crew some work. OFRI would not tell me to do this or not do this; rather, OFRI's materials (and educational partnerships) would help me understand what I was seeing in my woodland and how I might support the health of my woodland, the health of the watershed, the health of the ecosystem, and achieve my goals for my woodland.

HB 2357 seeks to eliminate OFRI and establish a Sound Forest Practice Account. So, it will eliminate OFRI—funded by MY HARVEST TAX DOLLARS—and set up an alternate OFRI? To whom will alt-OFRI be beholden? And how much of this has to do with an OPB, Oregonian, and ProPublica joint article riddled with so many errors I've had to rethink every position I've taken that's been influenced by what I used to think was good journalism? If a person's starting point is that no one should ever cut a tree, then yes, OFRI might be a problem. If a person's starting point is to learn about healthy forests, OFRI is a treasure trove of information.

HB 2379 seeks to establish a severance tax on a renewable resource. Severance taxes on forestland in other states has led to conversion of forestland to more lucrative uses. 2379 also seeks to use those severance tax monies for emergency wildfire funding. Ignoring for now the inappropriateness of a severance tax on a renewable resource, it seems like woodland owners will be disproportionately responsible for the state's wildfire concerns. My wife and I find this particularly ironic since we know that in case of another wildfire, there will not be firefighter response to save our trees—just like there wasn't this time. (Nor would we expect that effort.) Nor was the fire (Holiday Farm) that burned our woodland and many of our neighbors' houses caused by forest activities. So eliminating a woodland owner resource that our harvest taxes fund to set up a fund that we won't get that much benefit from, in the wake of wildfires that burned many of our properties, seems cruel—or, more accurately, polemical. But like the fore mentioned ProPublica piece, the object of the polemic is unclear.

Let's allow the memorandum of understanding a chance to work before putting undue burdens on landowners and industry professionals already suffering.

Thank you for your consideration.

Theresa Hausser