



**Clatsop County**  
Courtney Bangs  
District 4 Commissioner

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing today in opposition of HB 2379 which eliminates the Forest Products Harvest Tax and imposes a 5% severance tax on harvested timber and reallocates revenue from the tax. That revenue is not being reallocated to the counties from which the harvest or lands occur, but to the state. It is of my opinion that the counties should have a larger stake if any forestland taxes are levied.

Timber jobs and businesses are the economic backbone of rural Oregon – the industry provides over 60,000 family wage jobs in our state. In 2020, these communities endured massive layoffs and the worst wildfires in Oregon history. A new tax on timber will eliminate jobs and businesses in rural communities that are already suffering multiple extreme hardships between covid and the extreme wildfire season we endured. Currently, 64% of Oregonians oppose new taxes and regulations on businesses struggling to recover from the economic devastation of the pandemic. Private forests were hit hard: nearly 40% of the acres burned in the Labor Day fires were on private lands.

Fixing large fires in Oregon requires actively managing our federal forests with proven tools like thinning, logging and controlled burns, not increased costs and taxes on those who have suffered from the fires. Now is not the time for new taxes. I implore you do give our rural communities time to recover.

Reinstating a severance tax encourages conversion of forestland to other uses (residential, industrial, agricultural) that do not provide environmental benefits like carbon capture and storage, wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation. Severance taxes are traditionally used for “severed resources” like coal and crude oil, not a crop that is planted and cultivated over time. State law requires harvested timber be replanted – on average four trees are planted for every one that is harvested, therefore, it's not a severed resource, it is a renewable resource/crop.

Forestland is currently taxed at its real market value: as land primarily used to grow and harvest timber, just like agriculture/farm land is taxed as its use for growing crops and residential and commercial property is taxed accordingly. Again, now is not the time in our recovering economy to implement new taxes that could potentially damage an already vulnerable business and economy. I do not believe that we need to change our current taxing structure for forestlands, and if a change is required, the counties should have priority to the monies collected.

Sincerely,  
Courtney Bangs  
Clatsop County Commissioner Dist #4  
FTLAC Board Member