

Chair Witt, Vice Chairs, Breese-Iverson and Hudson, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify opposing HB 2357 and HB2379, both of which abolish OFRI. My name is Annabelle Morgan and I live in Washington County with forestland in Lincoln County. As you are aware, knowledge is the key to making informed decisions and only comes through personal experience and fact-based education beginning as a child and developing through adulthood. OFRI is funded through Forest Harvest Tax Revenue, supports forestry, the backbone of rural communities and income for over 60,000 family jobs, and funds educational materials and programs especially important as the chasm between rural and urban knowledge of science based management of our natural resources grows. Most public educators have neither background nor funding to teach Natural Resource classes. OFRI fulfills that role. It partners with OSU Forestry Research projects, develops and distributes colorful, factual educational materials and lesson plans, and has conducted workshops for 1000 teachers on maintaining healthy forests and environment through compliance with the Oregon Forest Practices Act it administers. It finances buses for outdoor education for students, partners with OSU Extension funding adult workshops, including over 20 Tree School Online Webinars like the "After the Fire" and "Firewise Program" to assist fire-impacted forestland owners with determining salvageable timber and connecting with agencies to assist with clean up, replanting, and rebuilding and for all adults interested in mitigating fire hazards in rural and urban areas to maintain Oregon's healthy environment. OFRI is an essential program for present and future generations.