

March 2, 2021

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Hudson and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

The hundreds of members of 350.org Washington County strongly support HB 2357 to eliminate the Oregon Forest Research Institute and require that revenue from timber tax receipts under the forest products harvest tax be redirected from OFRI to support sound forestry practices and to collaborate with other agencies for healthy forest management. HB2357 is, in part, an environmental justice issue because the forest harvest tax is used to promote forest practices that harm not only the environment and our water supplies, but also rural and under-resourced communities and forest workers who apply pesticides or work in areas that have been sprayed. Bad forest management contributes to the emission of greenhouse gases and fuels climate change. Climate change will continue to worsen environmental conditions associated with chronic illness and cause social and economic disruptions affecting disadvantaged communities and all of us.

350.org Washington County is a grassroots citizen organization working to support measures that will help to mitigate the most disastrous impacts of climate change already impacting Oregon. It is a scientific fact that Oregon's forests, if properly stewarded and managed to benefit ALL citizens, not just Timber interests, have huge potential to serve the public need with clean water and carbon sequestration.

The Oregonian-OPB-ProPublica report published on 8/4/2020 detailed how OFRI uses their resources to suppress science on forest -carbon, promote industrial forestry practices that affect Oregon's drinking water supplies, and dabble in inappropriate lobbying efforts. Their agenda and propaganda machine have not benefited Oregonians, and the funds behind their agenda are better redirected to support science, community health and modernized forest management practices.

Oregonians would benefit from repurposing OFRI funds towards investments in adaptive resource management and sound climate science as it relates to forests, carbon sequestration and storage, clean air and bountiful, clean drinking water. All of this should be considered in the face of increasing wildfire risk and smoke pollution, the frightening loss of homes and community infrastructure, and the loss of wildlife habitat. OFRI's slick and pervasive purported "education" offers questionable science "facts" such as native bees prefer to nest in clear cuts and not their natural habits, or growing small trees on short rotations is better for the climate than mature forests.

Please vote yes on HB 2357 to end OFRI's efforts to undermine climate and environmental health research from Oregon State University, carry out one-sided educational programs and spend millions of dollars every year claiming that Oregon's logging laws are modern and strong, when in reality they are far weaker than our neighboring states.

Thanks for your time in reviewing these issues and taking action to terminate OFRI and using the funds allocation to better purpose for our people and the environment.

Debby Garman, Team Lead 350.org Washington County
350WashCo@gmail.com