

Thank you, Chair Witt and Committee members for taking the time to read my testimony in support of HB 2357. My name is Jan Zuckerman and as a Portland Public Schools teacher and youth mentor for over 30 years, I understand the influence education has on our children and communities. It is because of this, that I adamantly support fact based curriculum that does not simplify or try to sell an idea so that only some people or industries benefit at the expense of others.

Years ago, I took my middle school students to a public hearing on the Oregon Wolf Plan. After months of study and preparation, several of them testified in favor of the plan. This civic action was brought to the attention of the Superintendent by an Oregon state representative, and I was asked to turn in my lesson plans to demonstrate that my curriculum was free of bias. Because I took great care to develop lessons that provided an in-depth study of the plan, provided information based on scientific fact, addressed the challenges for all stakeholders, and promoted critical thinking, my work was supported. In fact, the 4-H Urban Rural Exchange Program grew out this work.

This is not the case with OFRI. Who oversees the half-truths, and bias of their curriculum that clearly promotes timber industry propaganda rather than forest policy that is informed by the best forest science? I am concerned that teachers and students are being duped by their messaging. One example of this, is the biased information given on clearcutting, using language that portrays it as the most sustainable and economic practice, including snappy statements about how it may be ugly now, but Doug Firs love it. Their failure to distinguish between tree plantations and complex forest systems or to take into account the impact of industrial logging on wildlife, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water and jobs, is unconscionable and detrimental to the critical thinking skills we, as educators strive to develop in our students.

We are in the midst of a climate emergency and have no time for misinformation. Forest tax money should benefit the state of Oregon with clear, unbiased research and independent science-backed curriculum. OFRI does not serve this purpose and should be eliminated. Please support HB 2357 so that our youth and our communities may benefit from fact based, updated scientific information that does not sell our state short of opportunities for a healthy livable future.

Thank you