

I support HB2357 for timber tax fairness and clean drinking water. Oregon has only a small harvest tax on timber which does not get returned to the counties to fund libraries, policing, fire preparedness and community college. A solution would be to reinstate the severance tax on the value of timber, thereby returning 60% of funding to counties as property tax. Furthermore, clearcut logging on steep slopes, no buffers on headwater streams and roads have resulted in high sediment and potential pesticides in drinking water. We cannot afford to continue removing natural buffers which lead to environmental degradation and affect our health and safety. A solution would be to provide tax incentives to promote longer rotations and minimal use of pesticides, such as a 50% reduction in tax harvest from management units aged 60 years or more, a 75% reduction from management units aged 70 years or more, and 100% exemption from management units aged greater than 80 years. Sustainable logging improves water quantity and quality. I urge you to bring back the timber severance tax for counties, 60% returned to counties as property tax, 25% to support the Department of Environmental Quality in enforcement of water quality in drinking watersheds (5%) and to fund grants/loans for community needs for water treatment and watershed issues (20%), also 15% for county emergency management for protection from wildfire.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Hood