

Comments to House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources in support of HB2357
March 2, 2021

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

I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist, commenting today in support of HB2357. I am asking you to pass this bill to eliminate and prevent further damage from the illegally acting state sponsored Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). It is high time that we clean up the state government's expenditure of scarce resources on industry lobbying groups and begin a return to decision making based on science and rational thinking about how to respond to a global environmental and public health crisis.

I urge you to pass this bill due to the evidence before us that OFRI has been acting illegally by lobbying for industry, attempting to silence scientific research that conflicts with their profit making motives, misleads Oregonians with false advertising in the face of continuing damage to drinking water supplies in many communities from industrial logging, and insidiously tries to educate school children on their one-sided story.

Enough is enough. We need to focus our resources and attention on addressing the climate and public health crisis. We know that standing forests sequester the most carbon. It is time to stop wasting resources on OFRI.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and for your very hard work.

Theodora Tsongas, PhD, MS