

Support HB 2357—Eliminate the Oregon Forest Resources Institute

Dear Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

We are writing to urge you to vote YES on HB 2357, the bill that would eliminate the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and direct its funding to purposes that truly serve Oregonians.

For three decades, the OFRI has used tax dollars to promote the industrial model of forestry. Though chartered to educate Oregonians about the state's logging laws and expressly prohibited from lobbying, OFRI has consistently worked to illegally undermine scientific research, oppose reform efforts, and mislead Oregonians about the effectiveness of our forest laws. They have ignored the very mandate for which they were created.

For example, OFRI has misled the public about their claims to protect clean water. Community after community that relies on forested watersheds for drinking water has been forced to spend millions of dollars to treat their water after inappropriate logging destroyed their watersheds. Even the Environmental Protection Agency became alarmed, revoking millions of dollars of funding from the state, citing the inadequacy of our forest protection laws.

Our forests (including the forest products that come from them) are incredibly important to Oregon, and some form of forestry/forest education should be offered for both the general public and school children. But this education should be moved to another home with the intellectual honesty to facilitate rational discussions about forest management and its impact on our health, watersheds and communities.

OFRI's current funding can be much better spent supporting sound forest practices and unbiased education materials, and supporting communities impacted by industrial logging.

Please vote YES on HB 2357!

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