



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

SFI-00001

April 8, 2021

Chair Nancy Nathanson
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court Street NE, Room 160
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as a citizen of Multnomah County, Oregon, and a representative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) to share our **opposition to two provisions in HB2379-6**. SFI is an independent non-profit that collaborates with a diverse network to advance sustainability through forest-focused solutions.

First, we oppose the provision in HB 2379-6 that would create a tax incentive only for forest owners whose lands are certified to the Forest Stewardship Council and would exclude forest owners whose lands are certified to SFI.

SFI operates forest certification standards designed to promote healthy forests and responsibly sourced forest products. The SFI Forest Management Standard includes requirements that conserve wildlife habitat, provide clean water, train logging professionals, and support conservation research. The collective impact of these practices is healthy, resilient forests that contribute to climate change solutions and decrease wildfire risk. Our standards are backed by third-party independent audits to verify compliance to the standards.

SFI standards have been recognized by federal and state agencies, including a 2016 rule issued by the US EPA on forest roads and water quality. EPA recognized the role of forest certification programs, including SFI, which "have made important contributions to improved BMP implementation through logger training, landowner outreach, and water quality requirements."

Across the U.S. and Canada, 375 million acres are certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard, including 3.8 million acres in Oregon. Our standards are used by a wide variety of forest managers and owners, including state agencies, tribes, conservation organizations, universities, and private corporations. We work closely with the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), a forest certification standard used by family forest owners, which is also excluded from this provision. The combined acres certified to SFI and ATFS in Oregon constitute 96% of the certified forests in Oregon.

The support for SFI in Oregon and across the U.S. and Canada illustrates the value of our standard to the landowners (public and private) who use them and to the marketplace who values these proof points of sustainability.

Creating policy incentives for landowners who voluntarily choose to get certified is a positive action. But limiting the incentive to just one standard is detrimental.

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President, Associated Oregon Loggers

Excluding SFI means the state is selectively rewarding some landowners and turning its back on other landowners who are voluntarily adopting practices that go beyond state regulations to create healthy, resilient forests.

We encourage you to reconsider this language. If you are going to include a tax incentive for landowners whose forests are certified, we urge you to also include SFI and ATFS in this provision.

Second, we oppose the elimination of funding for the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). OFRI plays an important role in educating Oregonians about our state's forests. OFRI is a critical partner to SFI's K-12 environmental education program, Project Learning Tree (PLT), sponsored in Oregon by the Oregon Natural Resources Education Program.

Environmental education is critical to develop a new generation of forest leaders and environmental stewards prepared with the knowledge and skills to address complex environmental issues, as well as motivated to take action to keep our natural world healthy, our economies productive, and our communities prosperous and vibrant.

OFRI has been instrumental in supporting PLT as a funder and collaborating partner on K-12 programming. Their funding makes it possible for educators to attend workshops and receive curriculum free of charge. This support would be eliminated by the provisions in this bill.

OFRI also plays a critical role in providing information about forest management in Oregon that has been critical to help landowners make responsible and important decisions about the management of our forests. Losing this important source of landowner education would be a loss for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nadine Block", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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