

I am a small woodland owner living in the rural area of east Multnomah County. I strongly support HB 2379, which would restore the timber severance tax eliminated 2 decades ago. Returning this revenue to the general funds of timber counties would help them provide for the needs of their county, such as roads, libraries, law enforcement, and other needed services. This tax would be based on the value of trees at time of harvest, not just the land. It is important that this bill include incentives for longer rotation harvests of timber. The longer trees stay in the ground, the more carbon is sequestered, providing a vital counterbalance to the greenhouse gas emissions that unfortunately will continue during these interim decades as the U.S and the world move toward a carbon free economy. Even after a carbon free economy is attained, the excess carbon debt in the atmosphere needs to be drawn down. Older forests attain a richer diversity of species with multiple layers of canopies that store more carbon, not only in the living trees themselves, but in standing and fallen dead trees and in richer soil and root systems. It is estimated that 50% of forest carbon is stored underground in the healthy soils of older forests. There are other co-benefits that are derived from longer rotation forest harvests. These include enriched wildlife habitat and improved water quality. This bill would also provide revenue to help rural watersheds statewide to address the damage done by industrial logging, as happened in the Corbett Water District watershed, leading local rate payers to pay an additional \$2 million to drill a well and compensate for damage to their water intake system due to clear cut logging. Restoring the severance tax would not work a hardship on loggers nor on small woodland owners like us. It would, however, lead to out of state investment firms paying their fair share of taxes for harvesting trees in Oregon's forests.