



## **Oregon Association of Consulting Foresters**

### **TESTIMONY ON HB 2379**

The Oregon Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF) is comprised of professional foresters who provide forest management services to the more than 140,000 private forest landowners in Oregon. ACF members help landowners protect and enhance property values, produce a more sustainable timber harvest, enhance wildlife habitat, and establish and protect a family's forest legacy. ACF members put the needs and goals of the landowners they work for first.

Our members, and many of the forest landowners they represent, are concerned about provisions of these three proposals that would either defund the Oregon Forest Resource Institute (OFRI) or eliminate it altogether. ***We strongly oppose HB 2357, HB 2379, and HB 2598.***

Oregon ACF members consider educating the citizens of Oregon about forestry as one of our most important professional responsibilities. We have seen first-hand the many benefits that OFRI provides the citizens of Oregon in helping to educate students, educators, and the general public in sound forest management and the many benefits that Oregon's forests provide the State. Without doubt, OFRI operates one of the finest general public forestry education programs in America.

- OFRI is telling the good-news story of our valued forest resources and the scientific management of these resources.
- It reaches Oregonians young and old, rural and urban, rich and poor through its excellent programs.
- These range from television advertisements and natural resources management publications to teacher training and student in-class programs and field tours.
- Literally hundreds of thousands of K-12 students, and thousands of landowners throughout Oregon benefit from OFRI programs.
- Ninety percent of OFRI's budget goes to K-12 education, landowner education and general public education, with only 10% going to administration.

And Oregon's forest products industry is picking up the full bill through the Forest Products Harvest Tax! This is a tremendous win-win for Oregonians. In summary, the Oregon Association of Consulting Foresters believe that an educated citizenry is important to the sustainable management of forest resources. Oregon Forest Resources Institute is a key player for achieving that mission here in Oregon.

### **FURTHER COMMENTS ON HB 2379 & HB 2598 SEVERANCE TAX PROVISIONS**

Furthermore, ***we strongly oppose the severance tax on the value of timber at the time of harvest*** as proposed in HB 2379 and HB 2598. HB 2379 would impose a 5% severance tax while HB 2597 imposes a 3-8% severance tax. Neither proposal is fair.

Reinstating a severance tax will encourage conversion of forestland to other uses (residential, industrial, agricultural) that do not provide environmental benefits like carbon capture and storage, wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation. Severance taxes are for "severed resources" like coal and crude oil, not a crop that is planted and cultivated over time. There are no severance taxes for wheat or potatoes, nor should there be a severance tax for timber.

Our current timber tax structure was developed years ago with careful consideration by elected officials with input from landowners, assessors, and the general public. None of that occurred with the writing of these bills. Instead, the

proposals are essentially a knee-jerk response to a series of hit pieces in the media written from a very biased point of view. **The fact is that timber harvest income is already taxed** through federal and state income taxes. A severance tax, quite simply, amounts to double taxation of income. Given the 2020 Wildfires, the proposal is particularly poorly timed, but is a bad idea at any time.

We respectfully request that HB 2357, HB 2379, and HB 2598 be withdrawn from further consideration.

Sincerely,  
Roger G. Lord  
Oregon Chapter Chair