

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2357

Dear Chair Nathanson and Members of the House Revenue Committee

My wife and I are small woodland owners, retired now for about 23 years. My wife worked in education, and I was a forester for the US Forest Service. We became small woodland owners because of our love for the land and its' forests, and we believe that Oregon's forests can and do provide a whole host of resources values that sustain our spirit, our economy, and our many needs - both commodity and non-commodity.

We have seen OFRI in action; helping small woodland owners steward their land responsibly, due in a significant way to the educational support provided by OFRI. We believe that OFRI has been remarkably unbiased in their publications and programs – contrary to the apparent criticisms of some media and environmental interests.

Here are some of the most valuable contributions by OFRI:

1. Free science-based teaching materials, teaching tools, manuals, and videos that are available to everyone.
2. As a small forestland owner, OFRI's Oregon Forest Practices manual has been invaluable in helping me navigate the complex requirements of the Oregon Forest Practices Act.
3. Student transportation to forest and natural resource field trips Bussing classes to and from field trips is one of the largest expenses teachers encounter when searching for opportunities for their students. I have been on some school field trips as guide, and see how much these students gain in their understanding and appreciation of Oregon's forests, waters, and wildlife.
4. Improving education through networking, and teacher professional development. Another exceptional service that OFRI provides is their organization and facilitation of the Forestry Educators Networking Group – a network of professional educators from around the state, who come together to collaborate on programing, improved practices, and the newest methods to incorporate more state and science standards.
5. A base of forestry knowledge I have observed OFRI's Environmental Ed programs at the Oregon Garden first hand. Their educators are of the highest quality, and OFRI's science-based high school curriculum is used in 70+high school natural resource programs, over 40 of them have CTE(Career Technical Education) accreditation.
6. Representation of forestry as a core component of Oregon's economic engine. Oregon has 22 commodity commissions. OFRI functions similarly to these 22 commodity commissions except in two ways. First, the 22 commodity commissions are under the oversight of the Department of Agriculture, OFRI is under the oversight of ODF. And second, while OFRI functions like a commodity commission, it is not labeled as such. The commodity commissions and OFRI both develop and approve operating budgets, and provide non-branded promotion, research and education programs for their area of interest. OFRI is totally funded by the forest community through the Harvest Tax; no public funds. OFRI's educational programs and publications are an important source for continuing education.

Please do not pass this extremely onerous and short-sighted bill.

Thank you

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