

May 10, 2021

Chair Nancy Nathanson  
Chair, Committee on Revenue  
Vice Chair Khanh Pham  
Vice Chair E. Werner Reschke  
Members of the Committee on Revenue

**Re: HB 2357A OPPOSE – Significant Changes to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute**

Chair Nathanson and members of the Committee on Revenue:

Rayonier was established in 1926 and owns and manages 2.7 million acres in the United States and New Zealand, including 120,000 acres throughout Oregon. Rayonier is interested in growing our ownership in Oregon and we are signatories to the Private Forest Accord.

When the Legislature created the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) in 1991 it did so with the goal to educate the public about forestry and teach landowners about forest practice laws and sound environmental practices. This is a mission OFRI has consistently met, benefiting all Oregonians and timber landowners for over 28 years.

OFRI-sponsored classroom and field-forest education programs for K-12 provides unique opportunities for students that they otherwise would not have. For example, Oregon Natural Resources Education Program at OSU provides professional development for natural resources education to teachers across Oregon for no fee. Forests Today & Forever allows youth & adults to experiment in outdoor programs using working tree farms and managed forests. The Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden gives K-12 students a place to discover the importance of our state's forests and see forest management in practice. The in-class forestry education program for elementary and middle school teachers, Talk About Trees, has been utilized to teach more than 100,000 Oregon students.

OFRI also functions as a commodity commission for the timber industry, **funded by the timber industry**, by providing educational programming to landowners and promoting the industry to all Oregonians, including topics like water quality, harvest methods, and carbon sequestration.

HB 2357A would stop that information from being shared with the public by prohibiting OFRI from expending funds on advertising for public education related to forest practices. In today's society, advertising is a key tool to provide information to the public and imposing this and other new restrictions on the ability to conduct public trainings and tours holds OFRI to a standard that no other commodity commission is held to.

Additionally, HB 2357A proposes to reduce OFRI's funding by two-thirds. It is unrealistic to expect OFRI to endure this extreme of a budget reduction and continue to meet its statutory duties.

It is critical for the Legislature to remember that OFRI is **100% funded by forest landowners, like Rayonier, who pay Forest Products Harvest Tax**. An additional tax we support because we recognize the value of educating Oregonians about our forest lands and appreciate the resources OFRI provides to the industry.

Rayonier recognizes the concerns that have been raised regarding OFRI and we support the Secretary of State's audit of the organization. We look forward to reviewing the results and working with OFRI to respond appropriately. Enacting changes to OFRI in advance of the Secretary of State's audit and report is premature.

OFRI plays a unique and critical role for the timber industry as well as all Oregonians. Rayonier opposes the changes proposed in HB 2357A and urge your NO vote today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adrian Miller", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adrian Miller  
Director, Public Affairs