

As a (now-retired) professional forester, who has worked both with growing trees sustainably and with helping other Oregonians understand and appreciate our forests, I strongly oppose HB 2357, which would change the mission of and severely restrict the funding for the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). In its present form, OFRI is funded totally by the forestry community, yet is an important resource for all Oregonians. It provides valuable information and assistance both to forest landowners and the general public.

We grow wonderful forests in this state, which provide the wood products we all use and need and also wildlife habitat, clean water, and outstanding recreational opportunities. I don't know how many times, during public tours of forest operations during my years with Forests Today and Forever, I heard participants comment that they "had no idea foresters cared so much for the land." OFRI helped sponsor most of these field trips—giving the many Oregon residents who aren't part of the forest community the chance to interact and ask questions of those who are.

Furthering this communication and understanding is crucial to Oregon's forests continuing to provide the many important benefits that they do. Oregonians deserve the sound science and reliable facts that OFRI provides. Please do not enact this damaging bill.