

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

My husband and I live in Tillamook county with our one year old daughter. I am a special education teacher and my husband is a forester. I have used the educational materials provided by OFRI in my classroom, as I have had several students throughout the years interested in forestry, and it has been a great resource for my students. The material provided is science based and explains the careful management of our forests and the strict environmental protection laws that maintain wildlife habitat, clean air and water. This is essential information for future foresters that want to continue to manage our forests for the benefit of all Oregonians. Who else will teach our youth about this exciting and essential career? We need OFRI to continue providing this education so that the next generation of foresters can be brought up. Otherwise, who will continue to manage our forests?

Less than 1% of people work in forestry; therefore, the vast majority of people have very little knowledge about the important work of the men and women in the woods. OFRI serves as forestry's voice to the public. Without sound, science based information on our forests, how can the public engage in competent conversations surrounding them?

With out of control forest fires on the rise, we need sound science and reliable facts driving our public conversation, not "alternative" facts that are driven by special interest groups. We have had enough of special interest groups dictating our forest management. These special interest groups shut down forest management on federal lands, and now we are watching them burn out of control year after year. Please, for the sake of our forests' health and for all Oregonians, let's listen to the people that actually have experience managing our forests and have the science to back their practices.

OFRI is funded exclusively by forestry professionals. Why should this money be used by special interest groups that will fund misguided propoganda? If they want to create propoganda, they should use their own money to do it. Please don't silence one of the only voices of forestry professionals.

I'm asking you as a lifelong Oregonian that loves the woods, a dedicated teacher, and a forester's wife, please vote NO on HB 2357.

Sincerely,
Ellie Hilger
Special education teacher
Neah-Kah-Nie School district