

TO: Chair Nathanson  
Members of the House Revenue Committee

FROM: Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Corvallis Oregon

DATE: May 11, 2021

RE: In Support of House Bill 2357

The curtain has been lifted on the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, allowing Oregonians to see what has been going on, which has led to HB 2357. As a result, it is right and appropriate to respond to what citizens have learned. An institute funded by Oregonians, must represent all citizens, truth and scientific information must guide them, and they must not be beholden to big timber interests.

OFRI was created by the Oregon Legislative Assembly in 1991 and is funded by a dedicated forest-products harvest tax. The timber harvest tax applies to both public and private timber. Therefore, the public must have a voice in how these funds are used.

OFRI has purchased several prominent advertising campaigns in the state of Oregon benefiting the timber industry.<sup>1</sup> These campaigns are paid for with taxpayer dollars. In 2015 OFRI spent \$1.05 million in taxpayer funds.<sup>2</sup> In 2016-2017 the advertising campaigns have focused on promoting a corporate website created by OFRI,<sup>3</sup>

OFRI provides workshops, publications and conferences. OFRI's K-12 forestry education programs reach more than 100,000 students and more than 1,000 educators annually. However, the information provided is not based on current science regarding the environment, clean drinking water, and global warming. It instead promotes the interests of the timber industry.

Therefore, what is needed is an institute that is devoted to climate science and climate smart forestry. Educators and students need to learn about Oregon's forests and the amount of carbon our forests can store, and the amount that is emitted by logging. They need to know independent, science-backed curriculum, and what our climate impact is. They need funding for outdoor education that doesn't have to go through OFRI

We also need transparency in use of public funds, and forest policy informed by the best forest science.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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<sup>1</sup> Rob Davis and Tony Schick (August 4, 2020). "[How a public institute in Oregon became a de facto lobbying arm of the timber industry](#)". *Oregon Public Broadcasting*. Oregon Public Broadcasting and The Oregonian Newspaper. Retrieved 9 September 2020.

<sup>2</sup> "[TAX-DOLLAR TIMBER INDUSTRY ADVERTISING FACES SCRUTINY IN OREGON](#)". Investigate West.

<sup>3</sup> <http://oregonforestlaws.org/>