

Date: June 2, 2021
Re: Comments about HB 2070

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chair Pham, Vice Chair Reschke, and Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

As a concerned Oregon voter and taxpayer, I am writing to request you amend and pass HB 2070.

In the long term, we need a better, more fair system of timber taxation that is based on harvest value. Our tax rates should be in line with our neighbors in California and Washington. We want our timber industry to survive, but it does not need the extra help that taxpayers are currently giving the industry.

As the League of Women Voters of Oregon notes, the current rate of taxation (\$4.13 per thousand board feet) "is a very low tax to pay." With lumber costs skyrocketing, the industry can afford to pay a fair share for the trees they cut down.

Tax Fairness Oregon recommends the following reasonable proposals:

- ...Remove the provisions requiring the Legislature to reset these rates every two years.
- ...Have DOR increase the rates by inflation since 2019 and annually going forward.
- ...Remove the caps on the collection and spending of the Forest Land Protection Fund.
- ...Remove the cap that says the Harvest Tax will provide no more than 40% of the funding for the Forest Practices Act.
- ...Create a sunset for the Harvest Tax for January 1, 2028.

With the blessing of vaccines reaching more Oregonians, I have recently had the opportunity to again travel around our state. I am continually in awe of the majesty of our forests - not just as lumber to be harvested, but as living trees that sequester carbon and provide shelter for wildlife. Trees that inspire us as human beings standing before something as colossal as the sky-scraping giants unique to our region. Oregon has been blessed with a tremendous gift in all that these trees provide to our ecosystem, with value not only when they are felled and cut into boards. Timber will always be part of Oregon's economy, but the state of Oregon deserves fair compensation for the loss of these beautiful, huge trees, which is where a fair tax system enters in.

Thank you for the consideration of this important issue. Please consider HB 2070 as a first step toward a more fair timber taxation system over the coming years.

Sincerely,
Audrey Zunkel-deCoursey