

Good day,

I support HB 2357 for many reasons. First, as an outdoor educator, I see that it is crucial to provide children with opportunities to think critically and to get to know the places they live and will be stewarding in the future. Misrepresenting the role the timber industry is playing in the ecology of the forest and in their lives is morally wrong, and is endangering children's lives by not giving them the proper ecological frameworks for making sound decisions in the future. Children need to learn how ecosystems function without the influence of for profit corporations so they understand how to conduct their lives: what products to buy, where to work, where they want to live based on the economics of the area etc. They need to understand the costs and benefits of the timber industry and learn to make informed decisions using critical thinking, understanding the multitude of roles the forest plays in our ecosystem and the actual impact of the logging industry based on peer reviewed research.

Secondly, as an amateur ecologist, systems thinker, and forest steward, I am aware of how important the science is that OFRI was trying to discredit. In an age of climate change, where western Oregon is facing drought, we need to be looking at how timber harvesting is impacting all of our state's water supply. Clear cutting trees young exposes soil to sun frequently and eliminates the ecosystem benefits that forests provide of holding water in the ground as young trees evaporate more water than they hold. This also leads to a drying out of the forest, making fires burn hotter in an already warming atmosphere.

Thirdly, the timber industry does not need more support. Oregon already has the lower taxes for timber companies than Washington and California and timber companies pay very little to the counties whose lands are being cleared (Chuck Willer, Coast Range Association). I wonder why, if the timber industry's practices were really offering many jobs and doing the environmental repair work that OFRI claims, wouldn't rural communities have more employment and wouldn't our forests be healthier? Timber harvesting has been increasing and the local communities are not seeing the benefits. Everyone deserves peer reviewed science on what is happening on public and private lands so we know how best to steward our forests and navigate the uncertain future.

OFRI's original mission was to educate the public on how forests work and to help land owners manage forests in ways that protect the environment. As I have learned from my mentors and friends who are in forests felling trees for ecological management and restoration, people do need support managing their forests, but not in ways that ignore the ecological facts and benefit private profit. We need people educating about how our forests actually function, and how different logging practices impact our water, soils, climate, and species we share this planet with. OFRI is not doing their job and needs to be eliminated.