

To: Representative Witt and members of the Oregon House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee

I am writing to support the concept of a timber severance tax. My husband and I are owners of a small woodland of 80 acres in Hood River County, yet we support the tax. We support it because we understand three important aspects of this initiative.

First, We know that this legislation is directed at large, mostly corporate owners, not small woodland owners like us. These large entities own more than 3000 acres of trees, in fact far beyond that. In the last 15-20 years two of these corporations have doubled the amount of forestland they own. Their main goal is profit and so they clear cut, they cut on short rotations of around 40 years and are often not sensitive to water and pesticide issues.

Second, many of our Oregon counties have been over logged and short changed by these corporations. In the 1990's counties benefitted by both jobs and revenues from timber, but that has dried up. Now they don't have the timber-related employment or the revenues to support roads, schools and fire preparedness for example. Oregon's forests are being used to cut the trees and send our profits elsewhere.

Third, If forest owners don't want to pay a severance tax they can take advantage of incentives and extend their rotations 60-80 years. This is especially important when considering the benefit of older trees in sequestering and lowering carbon. Thank you,
Paulette Wittwer