

With half our state covered with forests it is critical that our next generation understand the role trees play in our state's future. While forests provide livelihoods and recreation they are at risk for fires and hold the power to slow climate change. This complicated mix needs to be understood and our teachers, particularly those serving BIPOC communities, often don't have the time or resources to assemble high-quality hands-on experiences that transform complex concepts into easy to learn lessons. This situation is exactly where Talk About Trees, a program primarily funded by OFRI, really shines. By bringing FREE hands-on tree activities into classrooms or classrooms of students out into the trees, Talk About Trees builds on classroom learning leaving behind a deeper understanding of the real world. Whether students are making paper or learning that pencils are made from incense-cedar grown right here in Oregon, or that trees give us oxygen while removing CO2 from the atmosphere, Talk About Trees offers science-based, curriculum-aligned hands-on lessons that teachers all over the state have come to depend on.

I urge you to consider the value of this program to the teachers and students that partake in the lessons in your decision when voting on HB2357.

Thank you,

Lisa Wilcke