

We manage 1300 acres of family forestland in Polk County from which we try hard to make a living.

HB 2379 wants much of the proposed severance tax money to go to fire funds??? We family forestland owners don't start the fires, we take the risk of fires started primarily by the public and nature. We know the danger of fire to our very livelihood and take extensive precautions to protect our homes, our properties and even our neighbors' properties. The forestry community already pays a large part of fire costs in Oregon and contributes greatly with machinery and manpower (unpaid) to help fight fires. HB 2379 designates severance tax dollars to counties to harden homesites in the interface. Why should we, who happen to manage forestland, pay for other folks residential fire safety? I don't get it and think these costs should be shared by all citizens. We are very happy to support OSU forestry and the Department of Forestry and pay our share for fire but please think twice before trying again to tax us out of business.

I agree that counties need to be adequately funded for schools, libraries, public health and safety and that community watersheds must be carefully protected and we must have money for fire suppression but why this should all be done on the back of family forestland owners escapes me. These are public issues the funding of which should be shared by all Oregonians.

We are part of the Small Tract Option which has worked well for us. It allows us to grow trees to an older age and to grow a diversity of conifer and hardwood species that thrive here. It gives us the opportunity to pay the severance and harvest taxes with money from harvests while also investing in the maintenance and enhancement of the forest - older trees, more diversity, etc. Please protect this option for those of us to whom it is so important.

Sincerely,
Sarah Deumling