

Testimony in OPPOSITION of HB 2379, HB 2389 & HB 2430 Forestry Tax Bills

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
February 25, 2021

Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Iverson and Committee Members,

My name is Eric Farm and I live in Coos County, Oregon. I'm a consulting forester with over 17 years of forestry experience and also a long time member of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, the Society of American Foresters and the Association of Consulting Foresters. I OPPOSE House Bills 2379, 2389 and 2430.

As a consulting forester I work with small woodland owners across SW Oregon. I can tell you without a doubt that these forestry tax bills will disproportionately hurt families that own small woodlands and will incentivize short rotation forestry for all forest landowners.

A severance tax that is based on the value of the timber removed will create an incentive to cut younger, smaller trees that have less value in order to minimize taxes. This is in direct opposition to Oregon's conservation goals. I can safely say that Oregonians value maintaining our forests as forests and diverse ecosystems. These taxes would penalize private landowners that are sustainably managing their lands for multiple uses and goals.

These targeted taxes will push more burden on to families who already face numerous financial and environmental risks owning forestland. And at some point, these continued tax increases could push them to sell or develop their lands for non-forest uses. This would be a tragic consequence for Oregon.

Please do not legislate a tax policy that will undermine the conservation goals that we have been working so hard to achieve. The state doesn't pay landowners for the ecosystem services that these forests provide, and rather than promoting non-industrial forestry, these targeted taxes will punish landowners that maintain their lands for long term stewardship.

I also oppose the elimination of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. This is a great organization that provides very clear information to the citizens of Oregon. These same citizens are asked regularly to impose additional regulations and taxes on an industry that they don't understand very well. The information that OFRI provides is invaluable to the citizens of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Eric Farm, PO Box 761, North Bend, OR 97459