

It has been challenging times for decades in Eastern Oregon for timberland owners. The necessary cost of our fire patrol tax is high. Log prices have been low and not competitive. Many mills have closed making it expensive to get sawlogs to a market. We have endured devastating fires all over the state, and most recently many west side forests were severely damaged by ice storms. This is not the time to add on the additional burden of any new timber taxes. Let's focus instead on helping forest landowners, (and all the good they do for public concerns such as air, soil, water, carbon, and wildlife), with the enormous task of rehabilitating their land.

Please do not do away with OFRI. The only way to find common ground for leadership in the state is to educate people, and this is what OFRI does best. They are a critical component in our natural resources sector.

Increasing the severance tax and eliminating OFRI will only cause more hardships to forestland owners and the rural communities they live in. Oregon is better than this; we need be part of the solution, not the problem, so that these stewards of our land can rebuild and recover.