

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to you today to encourage you to vote NO on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598 that either de-fund the Oregon Forest Resources Institute or eliminate it all together.

I am a teacher of seventeen years and have personally benefited from OFRI by utilizing and incorporating many of their teaching resources and curriculum into my classes. OFRI's educational resources are current industry and scientific information that is correlated with the state of Oregon's teaching standards. I have referred the OFRI curriculum and resources to many other educators, new and veteran. These resources are free, which for an educator is pivotal, and correlated to different grade levels. Not only the curriculum, but the field trip transportation compensation provides teachers resources to provide equity to students and an exposure to life science. OFRI provides students with possible career pathways by showing the multitude of jobs that are found in the field of natural resources.

As an educator I have participated in several of their committees to insure that their curriculum aligns with the state Science and Career/Technical education standards in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources. Over my seventeen year teaching career OFRI has provided multiple professional learning workshops and tours every year. Through their professional learning opportunities I have been able to implement the current trends of the industry and current science data or concepts into my classes. I have attended many workshops in my career and always preferred to attend OFRI sponsored events because of the emphasis on current science information. The workshops are very well organized and professional. Through the resources and opportunities provided by OFRI over my career as a teacher our classes and natural resources program has increased to have a greater balance of science, hands on field work, and work based industry instruction. What I have learned from the many years of OFRI workshops, programs, and connections to OFRI facilitated industry summer work experience, I was able to become an accredited instructor to provide college credit. Our high school forestry Natural Resources program provides an opportunity for students to receive college credit for Forestry 111 (Forestry Perspectives), which would not have been possible without OFRI leadership.

Several years ago, on a woodland tour sponsored by OFRI, I asked a man who was a family friend, past OFRI board member, and timber owner whose wife had been an educator, "When things are tough and the economy is down, why do you still donate to programs?" He calmly answered, " We must always support the education of future generations. They are our future." OFRI has done just that. They have helped me educate future generations and they need to continue to do so.

I urge you to please vote no on these detrimental bills. Oregon's schoolchildren benefit greatly from the curriculum and literacy materials that are correlated to state standards, outdoor experiences and funding provided by OFRI's K-12 education program.

Thank you,

Simon Babcock
9-12 Science & Natural Resources Instructor