

February 6, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Water and Natural Resources
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition to HB 3019

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee.

My name is Tom Nygren. My wife and I are small woodland owners in Washington and Douglas Counties. We sustainably manage about 220 acres for timber production, wildlife habitat, and other values. Thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to HB 3019 which would practically end the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) by taking two-thirds of the funding and changing how it operates.

Since I retired in 1997, my wife and I have become avid woodland owners, trying to manage our property in a sustainable and productive manner for a variety of resource values, including clean water, clean air, timber, and wildlife habitat. Oregon Forest Resources Institute has been invaluable in providing quality information to us on this journey. We see the same happening with many other woodland owners, but the primary benefit we see in having a wonderful organization like OFRI is what they have done in being a trusted and available source of quality written material, assistance in media events, and educational material and assistance to teachers, and many other ways to help the average Oregonian understand and appreciate all the forests in the state. Their contribution to helping Oregonians of all ages understand and appreciate forests is immeasurable!

A short list of these major OFRI benefits is:

- fostering public awareness through scientific research, public workshops on forest management, K-12 forest education programs, promotion of best practices on Oregon's forests
- relevant and well-researched in-depth special reports on topics like water quality, carbon storage, harvest methods, wildlife habitat and wildfire
- supporting the WOWnet Program-Women Owning Woodlands. Forty percent of Oregon's small woodlands are owned by women. WOWnet gives them a seat at the table and a voice in the room
- providing citizen education, especially to the estimated 60,000 mostly rural family forestland owners who own between 10 and 5,000 acres and who make up roughly one half of private forestland ownership in the state

Finally, let us make two very significant points:

- 1. The Legislature created OFRI in 1991 to educate the public and landowners about forest practices. OFRI is funded exclusively through the Forest Products Harvest Tax, a volumetric tax on harvested timber paid only by timber growers and receives NO General Fund dollars. It performs a vital function, much as several agricultural commissions do to support farmers.**
- 2. Landowners and conservationists came together in 2020 to pass the Private Forest Accord. There is a great amount of information that needs to be disseminated to both landowners and the public regarding the PFA. Without OFRI, who will make that happen?**

To defund OFRI would deprive Oregon school children and teachers of a valuable educational resource. We must always support the education of future generations. They are our future." OFRI has done just that. I am thankful they have helped us educate future generations and they need to continue to do so.

Please vote against HB 3019 or any bill to eliminate or change OFRI.

Sincerely,

Tom Nygren
19022 SW Finnigan Hill Road
Hillsboro, OR 97123
503-628-5472