

Submitter: Paulette Wittwer

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB3019

I am writing to support HB 3019, Relating to OFRI. This bill is long overdue in establishing changes in the budget and activities of Oregon Forest Resources Institute. For too long OFRI has been a mouthpiece for corporate timber companies and practices that are not in line with conservation of our forests and water. My husband and I have a woodland and farm in the upper Hood River Valley, so we have some understanding of farm, forestry, logging and water issues; we disagree with the one-sided views on forestry that OFRI presents to the public.

One of the most objectionable aspects of OFRI is that it is funded by Oregon taxpayers dollars. We shouldn't have to pay for PR and lobbying that benefits private forest industries. However, it isn't just the dollar cost; OFRI's actions ultimately come at the expense of Oregon's water, habitat and capacity to cope with climate realities.

HB 3019 is a step in the right direction, shifting part of the harvest tax revenue that currently supports OFRI to fund OSU Programs including K-12 education that includes environmental literacy. Other positive parts of the measure expands the OFRI Board to include a more diverse, conservation- oriented membership, prohibits the institute from spending funds on advertising or outreach and gives ODF the responsibility to review the accuracy of OFRI's communications. I hope this bill moves forward successfully and ends up providing needed changes in OFRI.