

February 7, 2023

TO: Representative Helm, Chair  
Representatives Hartman & Owens, Vice-Chairs  
Members, House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Water and Natural Resources

FROM: Susan Watkins & Arnie Hollander  
13440 SW McCabe Chapel Road  
McMinnville, OR 97128

RE: We OPPOSE HB 3019

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

We own a small woodland in Yamhill County. Susan also serves on the Board of the Yamhill County Chapter of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association and is a past member (and past Acting Chair) of the Committee for Family Forestlands, which advises the Oregon Board of Forestry about matters affecting small forestland owners.

It's amazing to us that we are still having to fight this fight to preserve OFRI, a proven valuable resource for small landowners like us.

Oregon has roughly 60,000 mostly rural small forestland owners, managing nearly 4 million acres, about a third of all private forestland in the state. Both as individual landowners and, for Susan, as a voice for small woodland owners, we know how important OFRI is to these lands. Just in the past few months, OFRI has published *Oregon Forest Facts for 2023-24* and updated its *Resources for Small Landowners*. When the new rules for small landowners under the new Private Forest Accord are settled, OFRI will reissue its wildly popular *Oregon's Forest Protection Laws : An Illustrated Manual*.

These guides and manuals, plus many others on roads, wildlife, and forest-related jobs, are the kind of important and useful information OFRI was specifically created by this legislature to provide.

It's the publication of management guides like these, and the research that supports them, that convinced landowners to agree to pay the Forest Products Harvest Tax, which funds OFRI. **No General Fund money goes to OFRI.** Forest owners fund OFRI to educate both themselves and the general public about best practices in forestry. **HB 3019 and similar bills will take money landowners agreed to pay to fund OFRI and use it for purposes landowners have not been consulted on and have not agreed to fund.**

Many forest owners manage their woods primarily for economic gain, but many others value their forests for wildlife habitat, recreation, and natural beauty. All these forests contribute to Oregon's clean water and air and help sequester greenhouse gases. Landowners want to grow and preserve healthy, sustainable forests. OFRI makes that easy.

We urge you to reject HB 3019 and other bills that would eliminate or defund OFRI.

Thank you.