

February 7, 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,

We are JoAnn and Roy Von Dollen and we are small woodland owners in Lane County. We sustainably manage a woodland that is a mix of Doug Fir plantation and native species. Thank you for allowing us 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.

We are new to small woodlands ownership having bought the property from another couple who managed the forest for timber production, wildlife sustainability, and overall biodiversity, especially native vegetation that supports native wildlife.

We have much to learn and we believe that the support that OFRI will provide to us will be of immense value to us. OFRI has specialized programs targeting small woodland owners like us to help us with our initial learning and also keeping us up to date as laws and best management practices change. Based upon our conversations with fellow small woodland owners, we understand that OFRI has tried and true educational programs that will not be carried on by other agencies. We have been informed that land owners and conservationists cooperated in the creation of OFRI, and that the landowners supported the tax that funds OFRI. We believe that agreement between conservationists and landowners should continue to be honored, and that the dedicated tax monies should continue to support OFRI and its mission. They should not be diverted to other, unrelated agencies.

We understand and support the work of the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund and Higher Education Coordinating Commission for Oregon State University Extension Service to implement Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan, but they will not carry on the good work that OFRI is doing. We do not support taking funding from OFRI to fund them.

We are learning the role that our woodland plays in contributing to Oregon's clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat. OFRI is a great asset to small woodland owners like us while also assisting to educate the public regarding forestry and advocating for the biodiversity of healthy forests. We appreciate that the Oregon Legislature created OFRI in 1991.

Forest management is extremely complex. Not only are we continually learning about the interconnection between all the ecological components that make up a health, sustainable forest, but we need to continually work to better balance the economic and social factors with these ecological components. OFRI, with its public and landowner educational programs, workshops, is an important asset for landowners to educate themselves in these complex items.

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. OFRI already publishes an excellent illustrated manual on the Forest Practice Act which is being revised and updated with the new rules from the Private Forest

Accord. It would be a loss to the community if this valuable publication were to be discontinued due to a lack of funding.

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. We are 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,

JoAnn and Roy Von Dollen