

February 7, 2023

Chair Ken Helm  
Vice Chair Annessa Hartman  
Vice Chair Mark Owens  
Members of the Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

RE: HB 3019 Oppose– Significant Changes to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute

Chair Helm and members of the Committee,

Rayonier was established in 1926 and owns and manages 2.8 million acres in the United States and New Zealand. We currently own 61,000 acres throughout Oregon and are interested in growing our ownership here.

When the Legislature created the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) in 1991 it did so with the goal of educating the public about forestry and teaching landowners about forest practice laws and sound environmental practices. This is a mission OFRI has consistently met, benefiting all Oregonians and timber landowners for nearly 30 years.

OFRI-sponsored classroom and field-forest education programs for K-12 provides unique opportunities for students that they otherwise would not have. For example, Oregon Natural Resources Education Program at OSU provides professional development for natural resources education to teachers across Oregon for no fee. Forests Today & Forever allows youth & adults to experiment in outdoor programs using working tree farms and managed forests. The Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden gives K-12 students a place to discover the importance of our state's forests and see forest management in practice. The in-class forestry education program for elementary and middle school teachers, Talk About Trees, has been utilized to teach more than 100,000 Oregon students.

OFRI also functions as a commodity commission for the timber industry, funded 100% by timberland owners via the Forest Products Harvest Tax. Rayonier supports this tax because we recognize the importance of providing educational programming to landowners and promoting the industry to all Oregonians.

In 2021, Rayonier was a signatory to the Private Forest Accord (PFA). A monumental piece of legislation that impacted more than 10 million acres of private and non-federal forests. The regulatory changes that resulted from the PFA are complex and will impact timberland owners differently depending on size. OFRI plays a unique and critical role in the implementation of the PFA – education to the small forestland owner community. OFRI is a known and trusted place for small woodland owners to go for assistance and education, it simply cannot be replaced. Any reductions to OFRI's funding, as included in HB 3019, would harm their ability to perform not only this critical work but also impact its ability to continue to meet its other statutory duties.

Additionally, HB 3019 would stop information on topics like water quality, harvest methods, and carbon sequestration from being shared with the public by prohibiting OFRI from expending funds on advertising for public education related to forest practices. Advertising is a key tool to provide information to the public and imposing this and other new restrictions on the ability to conduct public trainings and tours takes away one of the key components of OFRI.

OFRI recently underwent a full audit by the Secretary of State, and we believe it responded appropriately by accepting the recommendations of the audit and making changes, including a change in leadership. Now we must allow OFRI to continue to serve its unique and critical role for not just the timber industry, but all Oregonians.

Rayonier opposes the changes proposed in HB 3019 and urges your NO vote today.

Sincerely,

*Mike Mackelwich*

Mike Mackelwich  
Pacific Resource Unit Leader  
Rayonier