

February 19, 2024

Senator Mark Meek, Chairman

Senate Revenue and Finance Committee

*Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee*

My name is Thomas Beechinor and I would like to submit testimony in opposition to SB 1593. My family has owned timber land for more than 150 years. We have always strived to manage the property sustainably and have been proud members of the Oregon Tree Farm system for over 30 years.

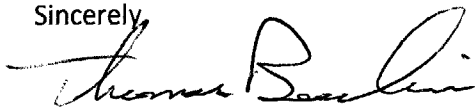
As president of the Umatilla Morrow chapter of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, I have found OFRI to be an excellent partner in educating the public on issues concerning sustainable forestry, water and wildlife issues. In addition, OFRI has been instrumental in educating the Small Forest Owner (SFO) community about the Private Forest Accord and its' impacts. Elimination of OFRI would be a grave disservice to those of us as small forest owners.

I currently pay, on an annual basis, approximately 80% of my property tax for fire patrol. I fail to see how eliminating OFLPF funding will help this situation, and quite frankly I believe it makes fire funding worse.

Finally, changing how taxes are assessed for a timber harvest puts timberland owners at an ever-increasing disadvantage. We have lost mills, the cost to log and transport logs have increased greatly and the value we receive for our timber has gone down. Increasing the tax we pay when we harvest our timber would be another proverbial straw that eventually breaks our back.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Beechinor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Thomas Beechinor