

Submitter: Weston Addington
On Behalf Of: Foresters and Millworkers of Oregon
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3489

Hello,

House Bill 3489 that imposes a severance tax on timberland owners is currently on the table for deliberation. I would like to express my absolute opposition to this severance tax. Timberland owners work on a slim profit margin due to the housing crisis. Housing prices have increased so much in Oregon over the last 10 years that current residents can't afford to begin home ownership and current home owners can't afford move out of their existing homes. This housing crisis quickly trickles down the lumber manufacturing market. In turn, timberland owners have limited ability to sell their trees for a profit. An 800% severance tax would not only devastate the market, but would ultimately put timberland owners out of business. Bankruptcy would be a direct result. Many foresters, like myself, and many mill workers would lose their jobs.

Year after year the majority of large forest fires are on Federal ownership. ODF, the private timberland owners and local fire districts put out the majority of the fires. This severance tax limits ODF's ability to fight fire. Without ODF at the forefront of firefighting, we will have more fires get out of control and private/State forests will begin to look like Federal timberland, burnt and inaccessible due to neglect. Due to lack of funds, forest reforestation will be poorly completed.

HB 3489 may sound environmentally sound on paper, but it will, in fact, indirectly cause more carbon emissions due to the increased annual fires. And HB 3489 will directly bankrupt timberland owners, close lumber mills, and likely affect or flat out eliminate my job as a forester. Please say no to the economic devastation that HB 3489 will ensue on Oregon's citizens.

Thank you,

Weston Addington
Forester & Citizen of Oregon