

Submitter:

Marlene Acker

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3489

Urban legislators are attempting to pass a bill that would increase taxes on the forestry sector by 800%.

They say the money is needed to pay for wildfire, but Oregon landowners already directly pay more for wildfire than in any other state, and a diverse group of 35 stakeholders rejected this idea because it's inequitable! A bill already exists to fund wildfire – one that has bipartisan support and it intentionally doesn't include this poorly conceived, punitive idea.

Last year Oregon saw at least seven mills close, causing the loss of nearly 700 jobs. With the U.S. economy in flux, now is a terrible time to pile new taxes on an industry that economic research has demonstrated already pays more than 1.5 times the taxes of other similar Oregon businesses.

The bill also de-funds the Oregon Forest Resources Institute! OFRI funds tens of thousands of students on forestry field trips every year, creates critical K-12 forestry education curriculum and provides critical training and manuals to help forest landowners sustainably manage our forests.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 3489. The severance tax concept it proposes is deeply flawed and unnecessary—and advancing it would have serious consequences for rural communities and Oregon's forest sector.

This idea has already been considered—and nearly unanimously rejected—by the wildfire funding workgroup, which includes a broad coalition of stakeholders from landowners to conservation groups. Their message was clear: this is not a fair or effective way to fund wildfire suppression and mitigation.

Instead, the workgroup endorsed more balanced solutions, which are now reflected in Representative Lively's wildfire funding bill. Those solutions deserve our full attention—not this recycled, inequitable approach.

The economic stakes are too high to ignore. In the last year alone, seven mills shut down, resulting in nearly hundreds of lost jobs in rural Oregon. In the face of ongoing national economic uncertainty, now is the worst possible time to burden the country's leading producer of renewable, carbon-friendly building materials.

Please reject HB 3489. Oregon needs thoughtful, practical wildfire funding solutions—not harmful policies that risk rural livelihoods.

Thank you for your consideration.