

## Written Testimony for HB 3489

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and members of the House Committee on Revenue,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3489, a critical piece of legislation that addresses the growing wildfire crisis in Oregon and ensures that our state's forest management practices are sustainable, fair, and equitable for all Oregonians.

Oregon is currently facing more frequent and devastating wildfires, which have already cost taxpayers millions of dollars. In 2024 alone, the state spent approximately \$350 million fighting wildfires. This burden on taxpayers is not sustainable, and it is clear that we must find ways to reduce these costs and increase our capacity for wildfire prevention and mitigation.

House Bill 3489 offers a comprehensive solution. By reinstating the timber severance tax, the bill will provide a dedicated source of funding for wildfire suppression and prevention programs. Specifically, one-third of the revenue will be directed to the Oregon State Fire Marshal to support community wildfire prevention and resilience initiatives, ensuring that our communities are better prepared for the increasing risks of wildfires.

Additionally, the bill reserves one-third of the revenue for counties where timber is harvested, helping to support local economies that have been affected by changes in timber revenue over the years. These counties are struggling, and the funding from HB 3489 will provide much-needed relief, enabling them to continue investing in vital public services.

**Another crucial aspect of HB 3489 is its focus on fairness. Over the past two decades, large timber companies have paid far less in taxes than their fair share, while smaller woodland owners and Oregon taxpayers have borne the brunt of the costs associated with wildfire protection.** By reinstating the severance tax and restructuring it to ensure that all companies contribute equally, this bill will help correct the imbalance, making sure that those who benefit the most from Oregon's timber resources are also helping to fund the protection of our forests and communities.

The bill's provision for a tax reduction incentive for longer tree growth is also a key innovation, encouraging sustainable forest management practices that increase carbon sequestration and reduce the long-term environmental impact of timber harvesting.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Committee to support House Bill 3489. This bill represents a fair and forward-thinking approach to wildfire management, forest sustainability, and economic fairness in Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to seeing this important legislation move forward.

Sincerely,

Darin Henry