

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walter, and Members of the Committee:

My name is John Christensen, and I am a small forest owner. I strongly support HB 3489-1, since it would bring fairness and balance into how Oregon pays for wildfire suppression and mitigation, as well as needed revenue for counties in which timber is harvested. Currently Oregon income tax payers and small forest owners who pay a harvest tax based on volume bear an unfair burden of paying for these needed services, while large timber companies and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) pay a lesser burden. Many of the Wall Street firms, which account for 40% of private timberland, are based outside Oregon and pay no income tax, yet they benefit from the wildfire suppression activities paid for by Oregonians. This bill would rectify this imbalance by changing to a severance tax based on the value of timber harvested, rather than the volume. There would be added incentives for small woodland owners like myself to harvest on longer rotations, which allows for greater forest carbon sequestration. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and move it out of Committee.