

Submitter:

Ken Jones

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3489

Dear Chair Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Rep. Werner Reschke, Rep. Jules Walters and members of the Revenue Committee:

Thank you for holding the hearing in your Committee on this important bill, HB 3489, that would add, finally, again a Severance Tax on timber in Oregon on public and private lands. I hope you read my comment, as, unlike so many of those who say they are opposed on this list of written testimonies and write only a few words that they are opposed to taxes or just that they are opposed to this bill and nothing else, I have read the bill and all the comments. A point that is missed nearly by everyone in these comments is that this bill, if passed, does not become law unless a majority of voters in the next general election vote for it.

So, first, I want to say I think it is important for the REIT's and out of state investors who own so much of the private timber land that this Act would apply to should be given a chance to convince Oregonians that all the profit they make off forests in OUR state should stay with them and that they should not have to pay the counties they cut their timber in to help them fight fires or other things they need, or generally help the state fight fires. Climate change is occurring more rapidly due to the forests being cut. The forest biome is disturbed and the combination of that with clear cutting often makes it hard to ever grow trees again in the areas those forests were. But the frequency and ferocity of the fires in our state is increasing and the people cannot continue to pay for increasin costs for fighting these fires. This bill even has in it that some of the tax goes to educate on how to prevent the worst forest fires.

I would like to suggest that if you are pressed for time and can't read all the testimony, that you read the testimony by Alan Journet with Southern Oregon Climate Action Now which gives important background on this topic of severance tax for timber. It says better than I can some of the things I wanted to mention.

It is so important that we have what we need for fighting forest fires and it is only natural that big owners of timber -- and this bill is careful not to be a tax on every timber owner, only the largest ones -- should pay to protect their "assets". Our forests are a big part of what make Oregon special and all of us who live here need to know we can defend them from climate chaos driven fires, the smoke from which is extremely harmful to our health.

Please pass HB 3489 out of Committee with a do pass and take that step to allow the voters of Oregon to say what they want, even if the large timber interests do not want

this to happen.

Thank You,
Ken Jones