

Submitter: Joseph Stenger  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3489  
Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joseph Stenger. I urge your YES vote for HB 3489-1.

We are all paying more and more for wildfires. Yet the severance tax was cancelled and rural counties suffered. The harvest tax has not filled the need. Large timber firms are not paying their fair share compared to smaller lot owners. Many of these private companies don't even pay Oregon taxes or support the local economy. Taxpayers in Oregon are footing most of the bill for wildfire damage.

We need to reinstate the severance tax, with a flat 5% fee for everything cut over 25,000 board feet.

We know that older mixed forests are less susceptible to major fires than younger, more homogeneous forests. So the tax structure should incentivize longer rotation times to achieve healthier forests that will store much more carbon.

By splitting this revenue from the severance tax into thirds for counties with timberlands, the Oregon State Fire Marshal, and ODF, this will fund fire prevention, mitigation, and suppression. This will improve health for us all by reducing toxic smoke exposure. The unrestricted money going to counties will bolster those struggling economies.

Considering the damage done to watersheds and to the environment by their activities, it is only right to charge the large timber companies their fair share. This bill will strengthen counties, increase community resilience, preserve older trees for longer, sequester more carbon, and offset the huge wildfire costs that we taxpayers have been paying.

Please vote YES to move HB 3489 out of committee and support its passage by the House. Thank you.