

Richen Tree Farms Testimony on SB 485-2

My family has owned forestland property in Columbia County for 45 years, and for the 40 years before that, my father managed timber property for Crown Zellerbach. Forestlands are a treasure that spans generations. They provide critical ecological and economic services for all of Oregon. One third of Oregon's forests are privately owned, and one third of those are owned by people like us, non-industrial landowners with relatively small holdings.

In the 2023 session, the legislature recognized that family owned natural resource businesses (farming, forestry and fishing) were important to Oregon's past, present and future. They did this by creating a \$15 million estate tax exemption for these properties. This helps these family business with their planning. This in turn helps them stay in business and promotes a healthy balance between industrial and family natural resource businesses.

Now, having worked for several months with the new law, we recognize that some of the details needed to qualify for the exemption do not match the on-the-ground activities needed for sound forestry management. SB 485-2 fixes this problem.

I urge you to support SB 485-2. Family businesses are important to Oregon. Please help family forestland owners with their long-term planning by supporting this bill.