

Submitter: Gordon and Gail Culbertson
On Behalf Of: Whitewater Forests LLC
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB485
Re: Supporting SB 485-2 testimony

Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane and Committee Members,

Our family owns three forest parcels located in Lane and Douglas County, Oregon. We are family forest owners who carefully and sustainably manage our properties under certification of the Oregon Tree Farm System providing for “wood, water, wildlife and recreation.” Three generations of our family are actively involved in tending our forests. These younger family members will inherit our forests when we pass on. Too many forest families like ours have been forced to cut trees too soon or sell their forest to meet the burden of estate taxes.

It's good for all Oregonian's that family-owned “forests remain as forests.” In 2023, Oregon made a significant step to encourage positive estate tax policy for natural resource lands with SB 498. If allowed our grandchildren will one day harvest trees they planted as youngsters. However, language defining the requirement for material participation is a difficult hurdle for small forestland owners. Managing a forest for many decades is a much different process than tending annual crops and livestock daily.

SB 485-2 provides an estate tax exemption for natural resource property and creates separate qualification requirements for the exemption for small forest landowners to better meet appropriate management activities for forest operations. This bill is concisely written and only applies a “small fix” allowing small forest owners the equitable and intended treatment for the natural resource land estate tax exemption from SB 498.

We ask for your support of the SB 485-2 amendment that will simply acknowledge and correct this inequity.

Thank you for your consideration. This will be a crucial step in assuring family forests like ours thrive for generations and we will “keep forests as forests.”

Sincerely,

Gordon Culbertson
Gail Culbertson
Whitewater Forests LLC
Springfield, OR

