

Submitter:

Jim Voelz

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB485

Dear Sir:

My Name is Jim Voelz and I live in La Grande. I own a little over twelve hundred acres of timber land just outside of La Grande, on Fox Hill. My Granddad Voelz purchased the first 160 acres in 1936, and our family has purchased land adjoining the original 160 acres over eight decades so now our property is a 1200 plus acre block.

Several years ago, I traveled to Salem and testified to give inheritance tax relief to farmers and ranchers as many farms and ranches have been in the family for generations as ours has. Our timber land is now on the fifth generation of Voelz's with my granddaughters enjoying the land and learning about good management practices.

We manage our land proactively to maintain a healthy forest that is fire resistant, to enhance and protect water resources, to maintain and improve wildlife habitat, and now to manage for carbon capture to combat global warming. In 2005 I was the Union County tree farmer of the year and placed second in the state that year.

With the skyrocketing price of land today, paying inheritance tax on property that has been in a family for decades can be crippling and sometimes not possible. I strongly believe that this country needs families that grow up with a heritage, love for, and the desire and understanding of how to care for the land. My Dad always said that we do not own the land, we just take care of it for a while.

Managing a forest takes a lot of patience. The effort you put into managing your forest may not be evident for years, or maybe even decades down the road. Some years you may put a lot of time and effort into a management practice, and other years you may not need to do anything at all, other than to keep an eye out for a problem that may be presenting itself, like an insect infestation. The inheritance laws should reflect this.

I support SB 485 and strongly urge you to vote yes on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Voelz