HB 2357 -5   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Sub-Referral To:	House Committee On Revenue
Meeting Dates:	3/2, 3/25

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs State Forestry Department, with other state agencies, to develop and apply sound forestry practices to promote forest health, incorporate regulation or monitoring of pesticide use in forests, employ adaptive resource management, and advance climate science or climate policy related to forest management. Directs State Board of Forestry to establishannual privilege tax rate on the harvest of all merchantable forest products harvested on forestlands at a rate not to exceed 75 cents per thousand board feet.

Establishes Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount under State Forestry Department Account. Credits revenue from privilege tax to State Forestry Department Account to be deposited in Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount. Repeals ORS 516.600 through 526.675 that establish Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and authorize OFRI to set privilege tax rate. Establishes that all moneys in Oregon Forest Resources Institute Fund left unexpended and unobligated on date of repeal shall revert to General Fund.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:
- Sources of funding for Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI)
- Roles and requirements of OFRI board members
- History of OFRI's past involvement with academic studies

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-5 Directs State Forestry Department (Department) to: provide support for any committee created by State Board of Forestry (Board) to serve owners of small forestlands; aid owners of small forestlands in understanding Oregon Forest Practices Act and implementing sustainable forestry methods; and conduct education initiatives for owners of small forestland. Transfers responsibility to establish annual privilege tax rate to Board from Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). Establishes Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount and the Family Forestlands Subaccount under the State Forestry Department Account and continuously appropriates funds to Department for specified purposes. Changes allocation of credit revenue from privilege tax to be credited to Department and deposited as follows: 50 percent to Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount, 33 percent to OFRI, and 17 percent to Family Forestlands Subaccount. Changes membership and adjusts qualifications of OFRI board of directors by increasing voting members from 11 to 13 by including one member who represents the environmental community and one member who has experience with a fishery or wildlife-related science. Prohibits OFRI from expending funds on: generalized advertising for public education related to forest practices, including the adequacy or effectiveness of any particular forest practice; and educational materials, trainings, tours, or other outreach that does not include a conservation perspective. Requires OFRI maintain records of interactions between institute staff and elected officials, members of boards and commissions, and senior agency employees; present report summarizing these records to the Governor no later than January 15 of each year; and make report available to the public on OFRI's website.

FISCAL: Lite fiscal statement issued.

REVENUE: Lite revenue statement issued.

BACKGROUND:

In 1991, the Oregon Legislature established the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) to enhance collaboration among forest agencies and individuals, improve public understanding of the state's forest resources, and encourage environmentally sound forest practices. OFRI is governed by a 13-member board of directors who establish the annual privilege tax rate. OFRI is funded by revenue from the privilege tax.

House Bill 2357 would repeal the Oregon Forest Resources Institute and Oregon Forest Resources Institute Fund; establish a Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount to the State Forestry Department Account; and transfer authorities related to setting a privilege tax rate to the Board of Forestry.