

Chair Witt, Committee Members,

I'm writing to request your support for HB 2357, in eliminating the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and Oregon Forest Resources Institute Fund. On August 4, 2020, The Oregonian-OPB-ProPublica published a report exposing OFRI for suppressing science on forest-carbon, downplaying the impacts of industrial forestry on Oregon's drinking water supplies, and engaging in illegal lobbying efforts to further the timber industry agenda. Many of OFRI's materials, which are distributed through television advertisements and educational curriculum, contain misinformation and skew the facts to support the timber industry.

I am a resident of Coos county and live in the middle of thick private logging land owned by large logging companies and investment firms. I see how the negative impacts of this lax style of logging does to my drinking water and our watershed. It looks nothing like the propaganda that OFRI puts out. I am perturbed that our tax dollars are going to this corrupt organization while our county struggled to fund programs that the community desperately needs like mental health programs, road maintenance, and healthy police department. OFRI is not acting as though it is an accountable organization and they are wasting our money while misinforming the public about what industrial logging practices are doing to watersheds. They are literally cancelling discussions on climate change which we desperately need to be talking about as a state.

I am concerned about how OFRI's environmental curriculum downplays the impacts of clearcut logging and presents Oregon's timber industry as leaders in environmental management. Sadly, Oregon's forest laws fall far short of our neighbors to the north and south in protecting our forest resources and communities from the impacts of clearcut logging. Oregonians have struggled for decades to reform forest practices.

Industrial logging practices have degraded drinking water supplies caused by logging and associated chemical spray and road building in Arch Cape, Corbett, Wheeler, Rockaway Beach, and many other Oregon communities. For the sake of impacted communities, Oregon's forestry curriculum should present an honest and science-backed view of the significant impacts of industrial forest management.

OFRI spends millions of dollars of taxpayer money to present biased information to the public. Oregonians deserve better. I ask that you support HB 2357, to get rid of OFRI and redirect forest tax money to benefit the state of Oregon!

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,  
Micha Gross