

Dear Friend of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute –

The [Oregon Forest Resources Institute](#) needs your help.

In the last year, OFRI has received some [extremely negative and unwarranted press](#) that has motivated a small but vocal group of anti-forestry activists to compel legislators to introduce bills currently under consideration in the Legislature that would, at best, [eliminate OFRI's funding](#) and, at worst, [eliminate the Institute all together](#).

OFRI is statutorily prevented from advocating on its own behalf and has no way to rally supporters to defend critical programs that allow Oregon school children to access the outdoors and learn about Oregon's forest and forestry industry, so we are stepping in on their behalf.

Many, if not all, of the allegations made in the Oregonian/OPB/ProPublica article are false, half-truths, or the information was misconstrued in a way to cast OFRI in a negative light. For example, one of the primary assertions in the article is that OFRI is funded by taxpayer dollars. In fact, OFRI is funded through the Forest Products Harvest Tax – a volumetric tax on harvested timber only paid by forestland owners. OFRI does not receive any General Fund dollars and is not funded by the general public. The article failed to properly categorize OFRI for what it is – Oregon's timber commodity commission – functionally equivalent and funded in the same way as more than 20 other grower-supported commodity commissions in the state, from wine to blueberries to wheat. OFRI Executive Director Erin Isselmann [penned a response opinion](#) that outlines exactly what OFRI does, and OFRI's former Executive Director, Paul Barnum, and former Board Chair, Quincy Powers, published [a similar opinion in 2018](#).

Yet, as a result of the erroneous reporting, the Secretary of State's office is currently conducting a performance review of OFRI, and that audit is expected no later than summer of 2021. We strongly believe the report will validate that OFRI has not overstepped its statutory boundaries. Unfortunately, that validation may not come until it is too late.

We're asking those who support OFRI to contact their legislator to encourage them to vote no on these detrimental bills. We're also asking that you consider submitting a Letter to the Editor in your local newspaper discussing the value that OFRI brings to the Oregon education system.

Please forward your emails and letters to us so we can follow up!

Below are some resources to help you find your legislator, submit a Letter to the Editor, and some suggested points to include in your communications.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara Duncan
Director of Communications
Oregon Forest and Industries Council
503-828-2373
Sara@ofic.com

How to contact your legislator:

1. Got to <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html> and enter your address in the top right box.
2. Copy the email addresses in the results for your Representative and Senator.
3. Send them a personal email – consider the template below.

How to submit a Letter to the Editor:

1. Identify your target paper, the word limit, and who to submit to in the chart below.
2. Craft a letter – consider the template below.
3. Submit to the editor or through the online form.

County	Publication	Word count	Submission
Benton	Corvallis Gazette-Times	250	news@gazettetimes.com
Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington	Oregonian	250	letters@oregonian.com
Clatsop	Daily Astorian	250	editor@dailyastorian.com or online form
Columbia	The Chief	250	jruark@countrymedia.net or Online form
Coos	Coos Bay World	400	amy.moss-strong@theworldlink.com or online form
Douglas	Roseburg News Review	300	ian@nrtoday.com or Online form
Josephine	Daily Courier	250	letters@thedailycourier.com or online form
Lane	Register Guard	200	rgletters@registerguard.com
Lincoln	Newport News Times	300	scard@newportnewstimes.com
Linn	Albany Democrat Herald	250	news@democratherald.com or online form
Marion	Statesman Journal	200	letters@StatesmanJournal.com or online form
Polk	Statesman Journal	200	letters@StatesmanJournal.com or online form
Tillamook	Tillamook Headlight Herald	500	jwarren@countrymedia.net or Online form
Various around Metro and other counties	Pamplin Media Group (Portland Tribune, Clackamas Review, Sherwood Gazette, etc.)	300	Online form

Templates

Email to Legislators:

Subject Line: Protect OFRI - vote no on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598

Dear Senator **LAST NAME** and Representative **LAST NAME** –

I'm writing to you today to encourage you to vote NO on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598 that either de-fund the Oregon Forest Resources Institute or eliminate it all together.

I am a **[teacher, educator, program director]** and have personally benefitted from OFRI by **...**

One of OFRI's three primary program areas is K-12 education, focusing on professional development for teachers, in-class educational programs for students, field-trip transportation reimbursement, and grade-level publications for teachers and students that meet or exceed state science standards. All materials created by OFRI are free. You may have heard of some of the programs made possible by OFRI like:

- **The Oregon Natural Resources Education Program** at OSU that provides free professional development for natural resources education to teachers across Oregon
- **Talk About Trees**, an in-class forestry education program for pre-K through eighth grades that reaches more than 100,000 students annually.
- **Forests Today & Forever** that offers experiential programs for youth and adults, using working tree farms and other managed forests.
- **The Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden** that provides K-12 students an opportunity to discover the importance of Oregon's forests, see forest management and understand how forests contribute to our quality of life.

I urge you to please vote no on these detrimental bills. Oregon's schoolchildren benefit greatly from the credentialed and accredited materials and funding provided by OFRI's K-12 education program.

Thank you,

NAME

Letter to the Editor

The Oregon Legislature should reject a slew of proposed bills that eliminate or de-fund the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. OFRI is the commodity commission for the Oregon forest products sector, one of Oregon's largest industries, and is virtually identical to more than 20 other grower-supported commodity commissions in Oregon, including the Oregon Blueberry Commission, the Oregon Wine Board, and the Oregon Beef Council.

I have seen the benefit of OFRI's work personally and can say with certainty that without its programming, Oregonian students would be worse off.

I'm a [teacher/educator/program director for XXXX]. One of OFRI's three primary program areas is K-12 education, focusing on professional development for teachers, in-class educational programs for students, field-trip transportation reimbursement, and grade-level publications for teachers and students that meet or exceed state science standards.

[PERSONAL EXAMPLE HERE]

Don't eliminate OFRI – its funding doesn't even come from the general public, it comes from forestland owners who pay a tax on timber when it's harvested in the same way the Oregon Dairy and Nutrition Council is funded by dairy farmers. Don't be misled – OFRI is a vital resource for Oregonians.

Other talking points:

- The Legislature created OFRI in 1991 to educate the public and landowners about forest practices.
- The forest products industry is:
 - one of the largest industries in the state
 - the economic backbone of many rural communities
 - the nation's number one supplier of dimensional lumber and plywood,
 - a source of more than 60,000 family wage jobs
 - a major supporter of secondary businesses.
- OFRI is funded exclusively through the Forest Products Harvest Tax, a volumetric tax on harvested timber paid only by timber growers and receives NO General Fund dollars.
- The Secretary of State's office is conducting a performance audit of OFRI, with a report expected no later than summer of 2021. No changes should be made to OFRI until the audit is complete.
- K-12 Education
 - ~170,000 students across Oregon participated in OFRI-sponsored classroom and field-forest education programs in 2018/2019
 - > 100,000 students throughout Oregon were served by in-class programs funded by OFRI in 2018/2019
 - > 1,000 teachers were served by OFRI's forestry education workshops in 2018-2019
 - ~60% of the fourth- to sixth-grade students who visited the Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden Natural Resources Education Program, presented by OFRI, came from Title 1 schools, which serve a high percentage of families with lower incomes.
 - Every year OFRI reimburses classrooms for the cost of transportation for XXXX field trips that focus on forestry-related studies

Other Resources

- OFRI video explaining what they do: <https://youtu.be/uE7v50hWPG8>
- OFRI Summary sheet: <https://oregonforests.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/OFRI-Summary-sheet-2020.pdf>
- K-12 Program summary sheet: https://oregonforests.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/OFRI-K12-Summary-sheet-2020_0.pdf

DON'T ELIMINATE OREGON'S TIMBER COMMODITY COMMISSION

- **Oppose HB 2357:** eliminates the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI), and its funding by re-directing the portion of the Forest Products Harvest Tax that funds OFRI to the Oregon Department of Forestry.
- **Oppose HB 2379:** eliminates funding for OFRI by eliminating the Forest Products Harvest Tax.
- **Oppose HB 2598:** eliminates funding for OFRI by redirecting the portion of the Forest Products Harvest Tax that funds OFRI to the Oregon Forestland Protection Fund

Oregon's forest products sector is vital to the state and warrants a commodity commission.

- The forest products industry is **one of the largest industries in the state**, the economic backbone of many rural communities, the number one national supplier of dimensional lumber and plywood, a supplier of more than 60,000 family wage jobs, and a major supporter of secondary businesses.
- The Legislature created OFRI in 1991 to educate the public and landowners about forest practices.
- OFRI is funded exclusively through the Forest Products Harvest Tax, a volumetric tax on harvested timber paid only by timber growers and **receives NO General Fund dollars**.
- The Secretary of State's office is conducting a performance audit of OFRI, with a report expected no later than summer of 2021. **No changes should be made to OFRI until the audit is complete.**

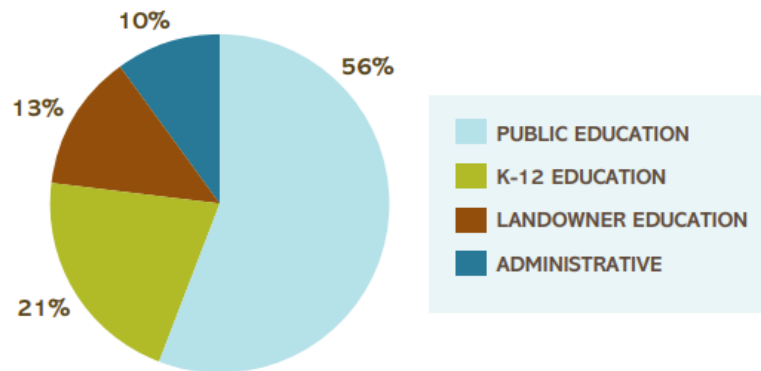
OFRI is a commodity commission, like 20+ other grower-supported commodity commissions, with distinct differences:

Entity	Funded by grower tax/assessment	Governed by volunteer board appointed by state agency	Requires legislative appointee	Prohibited from lobbying	Funding determined by Legislature	Can directly levy assessments to industry
OFRI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
22 Other Commodity Commissions**	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Oregon Wine Board	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

** Oregon Albacore Commission, Oregon Alfalfa Seed Commission, Oregon Beef Council, Oregon Blueberry Commission, Oregon Clover Seed Commission, Oregon Dairy and Nutrition Council, Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, Oregon Fine Fescue Commission, Oregon Hazelnut Commission, Oregon Hop Commission, Oregon Mint Commission, Oregon Potato Commission, Oregon Processed Vegetable Commission, Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission, Oregon Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission, Oregon Salmon Commission, Oregon Sheep Commission, Oregon Strawberry Commission, Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission, Oregon Tall Fescue Commission, Oregon Trawl Commission, Oregon Wheat Commission

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute is dedicated to advancing public understanding of forests, forest management and forest products, and encouraging sustainable forestry through landowner education.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS VS. PROGRAM COSTS



In each of the past 18 years, OFRI has received the state controller's "Gold Star" award for timely and accurate financial reporting.

From OFRI's 2019-2020 Annual Report

Highlights from OFRI's three primary program areas:

1. K-12 Education

- ~170,000 students across Oregon participated in OFRI-sponsored classroom and field-forest education programs in 2018/2019
- > 100,000 students throughout Oregon were served by in-class programs funded by OFRI in 2018/2019
- > 1,000 teachers were served by OFRI's forestry education workshops in 2018-2019
- ~60% of the fourth- to sixth-grade students who visited the Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden Natural Resources Education Program in 2018/2019, presented by OFRI, came from Title 1 schools, which serve a high percentage of families with lower incomes.
- Every year OFRI budgets and spends roughly \$95,000 to reimburse classrooms for the cost of more than 400 buses for field trips that focus on forestry-related studies, enabling field trips for ~25,000 school children and ~5,000 teacher or parent chaperones.

2. Landowner Education

- 78 trainings attended by over 6,000 landowners in 2019/2020
- OFRI helped organize 20 Tree School Online webinars for forest landowners in 2019/2020.
- OFRI produces Oregon's Forest Protection Laws Manual – a 300+ illustrated reference for forest landowners, managers and operators to understand and follow the Oregon Forest Practices Act

3. Public Education

- TV and radio advertising about the Oregon Forest Practices Act
- County Economic Fact Sheets - how the forest products industry impacts Oregon's 36 counties
- Bi-annual Oregon Forest Facts booklet about Oregon's forests and forest industry
- In-depth special reports on topics like water quality, carbon storage, harvest methods, and wildfire