

Oregon Forest Resource Institute, OFRI, has been a beneficial source of educational material and funding for generations of Oregonian students. The Oregon Natural Resources Education Program at OSU provides professional development for natural resources education to teachers across Oregon for no fee. Forests Today & Forever allows youth & adults to experiment in outdoor programs using working tree farms and managed forests. The Rediscovery Forest at Oregon Garden gives K-12 Oregon students a place to discover the importance of our state's forests, see forest management in practice and how those forests contribute to our quality of life. Talk About Trees is an in-class forestry education program for pre K -eighth grade that teachers have accessed for more than 100,000 Oregon students.

These programs teach our children the importance of one of our state's most precious resources, our forests. Far from being a one sided conversation, forest professional's affiliated with universities, public and private landowners are involved. I personally have accessed OFRI's treasure trove of online and printed educational material when attending school presentations and career fairs separate from the above programs. For example "Sounds of the Forest" or the "Wildlife in Managed Forests" series introduce children to the diverse life that call our forests home and how balanced forest management is essential to the ecosystem. "Find Your Path" offers a look at the multitude of forestry related careers available to our youth. "Forest Threats" and the array of "Forest Fact" sheets detail the various dangers our forests face from threats such as fire, climate change and invasive species. OFRI is helping to ensure that balanced forest management for Oregon forests is a vital piece of the conversation for generations to come through education and hands on experiences.

Passing Bill 2357 to eliminate OFRI prior to the conclusion of the Secretary of State's performance review of OFRI is not only unfair, but also wastes valuable time and resources of the Secretary of State's office. I firmly believe that all erroneous allegations against OFRI will be dissolved by this review and would like to see this issue re-examined after the review is complete, although I doubt it will be proven necessary.

In closing, to truly protect our forests that we are all so proud of, we need education. Taking away OFRI accomplishes the exact opposite of that.  
Thank you