

Chair Witt, Committee Members,

My name is Dr. Ann Turner. As a physician, I spent my career working in federally qualified community health centers with underserved populations, those disproportionately impacted by climate change, including wildfires, drought, and excessive heat.

I'm writing to request your support for HB 2357, in eliminating the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and Oregon Forest Resources Institute Fund. Federally Qualified Community Health Centers are governed by a Board of Directors with at least a 51% majority consumers. OFRI presents itself as a government agency, but its Board includes nine representatives of the forest products industry, one member representing small woodland owners and one representative of forest industry employees. A Board with this make-up is focused on promoting timber interests rather than promoting the health of our forests and the interests of all Oregonians. Special interest groups should not be funded by tax dollars.

We are living in a time when "fake news" is rampant. OFRI puts forth information that is not based on scientific research and markets forestry curriculum to schools that holds up current forestry practices, i.e. clear cutting, as the way forestry should be done in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary. It is critical to a democratic society that our educational materials are based on fact, not on industry advertising.

Sound forest practices are critical to mitigating the impacts of climate change. We have such a treasure in our old growth forests. Beyond their natural beauty, old growth forests, rather than newly planted clear cuts, sequester carbon and protect the planet from rising temperatures. We have very little time left to stem the tide of rising temperatures. Eliminating OFRI is a step in the right direction to save our planet from the damaging impacts of climate change.

I urge you to vote for HB 2357. Thank you,

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