

Comments at March 2 public hearing:

"I'm Fergus Mclean, a retired forester certified in Woodland Management by OSU Extension.

In light of the billions in industry tax avoidance and the skyrocketing value of timber, industry can well afford to contribute their fair share of public revenue.

As stewards of the greatest carbon sink on the planet and home to the scientists bringing new understanding to light, it's only common sense that Oregon should lead the world in forest carbon science.

It is also only common sense that the timber industry should share a portion of its tax avoidance proceeds and windfall profits to help fund the transition to a new forest management paradigm of carbon storage and ecological forestry.

Please consider allocating a \$1/thousand board foot industry severance tax to fund research in the Elliott forest to make Oregon the global leader in forest carbon science and to educate and prepare for green economy careers every Oregon schoolchild with a passion and talent for forestry.

Thank you."

Today's OPB report on timber prices confirms that industry is in a very good position to handle a boosted severance tax;

https://www.opb.org/article/2021/03/02/oregons-timber-industry-says-it-cant-afford-new-taxes-despite-record-profits/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=First%20Look%20March%203%202021&utm_content=First%20Look%20March%203%202021+CID_2bcda55c99972edfc51d27b23656e331&utm_source=firstlook&utm_term=Learn%20more

Shifting the focus of planning for a research institute in the Elliott Forest to emphasize carbon- and ecological forestry-related research holds the promise of significant benefits to the local SW coast economy and forest communities around the state, through providing access for small woodlot owners to global markets for forest carbon credits. The ability to receive income by maintaining rather than liquidating intact forests will bring many other benefits as well, including the valuable ecosystem services intact forests provide, plus recreation opportunities and related employment, as well as the benefits of doing the science itself.

Training and education for students in one of the world's largest and most prestigious research forests- which the Elliott can become- can be a ticket to successful careers in forest science, forestry, ecological services, and recreation for Oregon schoolkids now finding themselves in isolated and depressed logging communities. As Elliott research leads the world into a new ecosystem-based forest management paradigm, a world of professional opportunities will open up for students who train there- if we are willing to commit the necessary resources to accomplish that objective. Those resources can only come, realistically, from assessments on the value of Oregon's timber harvests.

We are at a watershed moment in forest science and practice, when OSU scientists lead a growing, transformational understanding of the importance of our temperate rainforest for atmospheric CO2 management; when the first college-level silvicultural text based on ecosystem management has just been issued (Ecological Forestry); and when one of the greatest public environmental outcries in our state's history has demanded her oldest state forest be preserved in the public interest, now to become the premier research forest anywhere, if we have the vision and courage to make it so.

Deconstructing the vast array of legal and bureaucratic structures which support our aging timber industry is an insurmountable logistical and political challenge. But imposing a reasonable tax on our still vibrant timber industry to provide the seed money for research, study and demonstration of best forest management practices in the Elliott can very realistically lead Oregon past the old paradigm of purely extractive forestry with its dwindling employment prospects into a new, ecologically sensitive model for forest management with vast potential for Oregonians' employment and community vitality and prosperity.

Above all, it will take courageous and visionary leaders to understand the critical importance of bold action at this key moment for the benefit of all Oregonians, our forests, our planet and our common destiny.