

Testimony for Passage of HB 2357

Greetings and Thank you for hearing our testimony in support of HB 2357 today. Your work as Committee members is much appreciated. Our name is Treothe Bullock - we are providing testimony from the perspective of a science educator with a background in forestry as a researcher, firefighter, restoration contractor, permaculture designer and tree planter. We are currently teaching Climate Justice, Chemistry and Forensic Science at McDaniel (Formerly Madison) High School in Portland OR.

As you all know it has become a new feature of the school year over the last decade to begin the year with air quality so poor that sports programs and even classes are cancelled due to air that is unsafe to breathe due to the predicted escalation of forest fires due to climate change. This last year represented the greatest climate disaster in our states history. You are familiar with many of the details. This crisis is predicted to increase in severity in coming years. It is time to reprioritize core values in how we negotiate priorities between ecological and community resilience and economic activity.

As you also know our current industrial activities have been changing the composition of our atmosphere by adding greenhouse gases at a rate 10 times faster than has happened on our planet since the evolution of mammals. The pace of projected change is outpacing the capacity of species and ecosystems to adapt at these rates of change. We are in a climate emergency and have little time - according to overwhelming consensus of climate scientists as represented in the UN IPCC reports - to quickly prioritize decarbonization of our economic activity and to invest in carbon sequestration strategies. True forests and their protection are a significant part of possible meaningful responses. I will argue that OFRI has consistently undermined the capacity of our forests to be adaptive and provide us with resilience in this climate emergency. It's logging industry focus has contributed to confusion and weakening of forest resilience. It has a history of corrupted values and it's funding should be reinvested in organizations such as the OSU Extension Outdoor School Program and Oregon Natural Resources Education Program that has the capacity to see the actual forest.

Paradigm shifting new research in forestry has revealed fundamental basics - long a part of indigenous knowledge, law, culture and practices here in the Cascadian region - about resilience strategies of forest communities. True forest communities - as opposed to the rapid harvest rotation/plantation agricultural models promoted by OFRI - exist with extended root to root networks between families of trees in broad interspecies associations facilitated by mycelium networks. These networks are centered by elder - so called - mother trees - who mediate resources and resilience strategies through these networks - using almost instantaneous chemical communication networks. The industrial harvest and rapid harvest growth replanting strategies promoted by OFRI have led to the large scale damage and

destruction of these true forest resilience strategies. Genetics of trees being replanted are narrowed, displaced and rapid growth prioritized. Clear cutting and strip cutting has led to decarbonization of soils and the die off of these extended mycelial / root networks, the mother trees who facilitate them in complex systems developed over the last 12,000 years have largely been removed from the landscape. In just over a century most of these complex resiliency networks have been severely damaged and in some places may never recover. This is a process leading towards permanent deforestation - and ecological replacement by vulnerable plantations.

While much of the so called “forest” industry has focused blame for the growth of megafires on historic unecological fire repression leading to a build up of fuels... forest ecologists are seeing this differently. The practices of large scale industrial harvesting has left soils weakened and exposed to rising temperatures and the drought cycles that are a part of why coniferous forests dominate our region. Plantation strategies of forest replacement lead to more rapid drying out during these warmer and dryer periods which increase the vulnerability of our forests to fire and the growth of megafires. Fire is a part of forest health - yet the development of megafire is a predicted outcome of the synergy between current logging practices and a warming and drying climate. The ongoing removal of beaver's throughout the system have weakened the capacity of drainages to be fully charged with water storage - an age old strategy of forests to prevent the spread of wildfire from ridge to ridge resisting megafires. Stream flows have already been reduced by 50% across the region as recharging capacity has been destroyed by industrial logging. Industrial logging is not the practice of forestry - but rather the destruction of forests to enable rapid harvest wood plantations. OFRI's name is a misnomer and an affront to the majestic forest inheritances which have and are being squandered by the practices promoted by OFRI. The colonial violence of privileging resource extraction and consumptive economic activity over the capacity of future generations to survive and flourish is an affront to future generations - and particularly those young people who are looking for sources of hope in facing what may well be the largest existential crisis of our species and of our beloved home - the climate crisis.

I am sure you will hear from others providing testimony about the corrosive and corruptive influence of industrial logging interests and dark money in the content of OFRI materials and trainings and distorted publicity campaigns. We know that the industry has consistently extracted wealth from our landscapes and communities without meaningful obligations to the damage of the commons or reinvestments in longterm economic/ecological stability of communities. I and my family have personally lived through times where we were threatened with violence, and even had multiple attempts made on our lives, because of standing up for forest communities during the spotted owl crisis of the 1980's. Sustainable ancient forest harvest strategies such as balloon logging failed because of being consistently undermined by gunshots into the balloons making such strategies unfeasible. This kind of historic violence is

the direct result of confusion and ignorance cultivated by industrial logging interests through organizations such as OFRI and their undermining of ecological science and privileging of short term extraction/consumption economic activity. Public funding has no place being used to subsidize such colonial violence in a time we must make rapid and deep transitional steps to a carbon neutral economy in a way that prioritizes those most impacted. It is an affront for our children's forest educational opportunities to be so broadly held by OFRI. It is time to defund the organization and invest in a fresh commitment to a resilient future which honors the majestic ancient forest inheritances of our state and helps our youth have hope in building truly science based ecologically resilient and sustainable economic strategies that stop weakening the commons and are restorative.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony.

Treothe Bullock