

Dear Members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

On the morning of March 2nd, I poured a cup of coffee and sat down at the kitchen table to have a look at the morning news affecting the state of Oregon. I should have skipped that cup of coffee, as what I began to read instantly woke me up and without a doubt rose my blood pressure. I had just become aware that sometime Friday evening, an amendment was discreetly made to HB 2674, that included a slew of new taxes targeting the timber industry, AG, fishermen and in general, every Oregonian. I am troubled that after everything Oregonians and particularly rural Oregonians have gone through in the last year, you would seek to further harm them by placing what you refer to on several of the proposed amendments as a "privilege tax". The people that you seek to impose these "off road fuel taxes", "tire taxes", "equipment rental taxes" are the very people who have suffered from the devastating wild fires and the recent ice storm, not to mention the costly covid-19 requirements imposed on them. They are the communities trying to rebuild, they are the Hazelnut farmers up and down the valley whose orchards suffered severe damage from the ice storm, they are tree growers and nurseries who suffered damages, they are neighbors like mine, a Hispanic American family owned and operated Vineyard and they are the hardworking men and women, who quite literally work in back breaking industries, to produce food, agricultural crops and raw materials. I recall reading the damaging affects the wild fires had on the grape production in the valley and I think of my neighbor, whose vineyard was covered with weeks of dense smoke last year, his tasting room was shuttered for months under the Covid- 19 edicts and with taxes like the ones HB 2674 will place on him, the obscene beer and wine tax and the many others that you seem to have no issue with imposing, I have to wonder just how much more he will be able to withstand? How much more will any of us be able to withstand?

Lastly, I find it appalling and unacceptable that those who wish to testify virtually via Zoom are given 60 seconds to do so. How is this fair and equitable? How is this an appropriate way to conduct the business of the people of Oregon? The answer: it's not.

So, if I were able to give you a 60 second virtual in person testimony today, this is what I would say to you:

Do you know what privilege in Oregon looks like? It looks like every one of you, sitting within the FOUR wooden walls of your homes, looking at your constituents on a screen, as they try to summarize in 60 seconds, the harm you are doing to them! Privilege in Oregon looks like the ability to serve a cold dish of revenge on those whom you profess to serve. NO MORE TAX INCREASES!!!

With sincere concern and outrage,

Darlene Atkinson  
Marion County