



April 6, 2021

To: House Committee on Revenue

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: **HB 2379 – Severance Tax on Timber Harvest**

Chair Nathanson and Committee Members,

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by county wide elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners, managers, and others as well as federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

OACD recognizes the need to generate revenue for a variety of purposes related to forest management. HB 2379 would raise revenue and distribute the revenue to several important needs. The proposed -5 amendments specify two needs that OACD believes are very important, are not contained in the bill as introduced, and should be carried forward. These are as follows:


(e) 7.5 percent to each rural fire protection district that has an annual budget of less than \$50 million, in the proportion that the total acreage of forestland within the boundaries of the district bears to the total acreage of forestland within the boundaries of all rural fire protection districts described in this paragraph.

(f) 7.5 percent to the Watershed Conservation Grant Fund established under ORS 541.947.

Rural fire protection districts have a critical role in Oregon in managing wildfire, and many of the districts are underfunded. We need to make sure that these districts can effectively carry out their mission.

The Watershed Conservation Grant Fund provides funds for environmental restoration work through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). This fund can facilitate important projects that restore forest health following wildfire and enhancing and protecting the natural resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input.



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