

It is urgent that the issue of timber taxes be addressed. I live in Josephine County where logging, especially private logging, has increased over recent decades. And last March a private logging operation occurred on a mountain near our home and many other homes. This logging located near Slate Creek and the lower Applegate River will lead to harmful impacts due to logging roads on steep slopes, erosion and runoff into nearby streams, pesticides and inadequate stream side buffers.

This is just one of many logging operations here and in other rural counties and much of this land is now private industrial timber land, owned by REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and TIMOs (Timber Investment Management Organizations). These timber dependent counties used to be supported by a property tax on the timber when it was cut, called the severance tax. This tax started in 1929 was phased out in the 1990's and the severance tax was supposed to be replaced by increased property taxes. but in fact property taxes were capped and county revenue was greatly decreased.

I have seen the consequences of decreased services with loss of revenue for libraries, schools, roads, water protection and law enforcement.

And I find it unfair that private and public logging operations do not pay a tax to the local communities. The earned profits go to the investment shareholders, often outside of Oregon, at the expense of the communities where the logging has occurred.

I ask for support of HB 2379 and reinstatement of the severance tax and for Improvements to the bill:

- Raise the percentage of revenue that returns to help counties — for water protection, schools, libraries, law enforcement and as they see fit, rather than predominantly for wildfire management.
- Request large profitable corporate and investment timber landowners pay significantly more taxes than small individual woodland owners.
- Create tax incentives for climate-smart and resource-protecting forestry practices such as Forest Stewardship Certification and for lengthening logging rotations to 80 year or more

I ask for you to support a timber severance tax. HB 2379 with improvements is urgently needed in Josephine and other rural counties.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill with improvements.

Sincerely,

Jean Mount
Grants Pass, Oregon