

## Oregon House Committee on Revenue

April 8, 2021

TO: Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee

This testimony is for your consideration as you deliberate HB 2379-6, a bill that I oppose.

This bill will defund, and thus eliminate the purposeful work of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute as it has been practiced for nearly 30 years in accordance with OFRI's statutorily established guidelines. My name is Carol A Whipple and, for the record, please note that between 2001-2009 I served two terms on the OFRI Board of Directors including time as Chairman. I am a timberland owner in Douglas County and a family member of the Rocking C Ranch, LLC ownership, a forestry dependent operation whose Douglas County business roots were established in the early 1930's in the sawmill town of Drain where my grandparents and parents operated a small sawmill and where I graduated from high school. The Rocking C Ranch, LLC, is now headquartered near Elkton, about 20 miles from my childhood home. As a lifelong Douglas County resident (73 years), the sawdust that still courses through my veins foundations an ongoing lifetime of experience with the economic, mental, emotional, spiritual, physical and societal demands of living a life on the working lands of a forestry dependent business. The Rocking C Ranch is now in the very capable daily operational hands of the next generation. We live in the presence of our history and know the ups and downs of this business only too well. As forest landowners we know that our investment of financial resources as well as the blood, sweat, tears and joys of everyday life is for the long haul. Our trees are exposed to the the potential physical risks of loss due to weather, fire, disease

and insects over a period of several decades. Meanwhile, erratic and unpredictable market and political risks are sometimes heartening and, frankly, sometimes frightening to our very being. I have looked to OFRI professional staff since its inception for information and believe that its total body of 30 years worth of work displays a dedication to credible and ethical educational efforts that have contributed to improved understanding, functioning and stewardship of the state's forestlands be they public or private. I am particularly proud of the work OFRI has done to educate landowners. Has it been perfect? Of course not. The Secretary of State performance audit will no doubt show strengths and weaknesses across the breadth of the program and is worthy of our full consideration at the time it is released.

Please vote no on HB 2379 -6

The balance of this HB 2379-6 is geared to the implementation of a tiered tax structure imposed on the owner of timber at the time of harvest and the subsequent reinvention of the dispersal of those collected funds across a variety of recipients that will be utilizing said funds. Both the specifics of the collection of the funds and the dispersal funds require far more clarification.

One can start with the imposition of the tax on the "owner of timber at the time of harvest". It is far from universal that the timberland owner upon which the timber sits owns the timber at the time of harvest. This could easily morph into untold issues put in motion by the tiered tax approach based on acres owned by "the owner of timber at time of harvest". Also related to acreage size but with other additional problems is the direction that there be a reduction of one percent of the tax for "owner of timber at the time of harvest" who receives Forest Stewardship Certification. This feels almost nonsensical. My perception is that the reduction of the tax on such a basis is poor State of Oregon tax policy as well as has the legislature tie those of us who grow and harvest timber to a specific third party certification

system that may or may not improve our existing forest management on our land. I know of no data or research that supports such a conclusion of improvement. Our operation is a member of the Oregon Tree Farm System and we are proud of that.

The issue of dispersal of these funds into a newly designed allocation system feels specifically egregious as it relates to creation of an Emergency Wildfire Fund that feels significantly removed from the existing statewide structure involving both public and private partners in both in-kind services as well as all resources of tools, expertise and financial. I ask that members of this committee specifically seek out the expertise of The Emergency Fire Cost Committee among other professional private and public fire fighting staff to attain even greater understanding of the change in responsibilities for this critical statewide issue of Wildfire that this proposed funding mechanism proposes.

Thank you for your consideration. Vote NO in HB 2379-6

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Respectfully,  
Carol A Whipple  
Rocking C Ranch, LLC