

May 7, 2021

To: House Committee on Revenue Chair Nancy Nathanson  
Representative Khanh Pham  
Representative E. Werner Reschke  
Representative Bobby Levy  
Representative Pam Marsh  
Representative Greg Smith  
Representative Andrea Valderrama

From: Regan Fisher

Re: Support HB 2357

Recent reporting has revealed that the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI), an agency that Oregonians fund with our tax dollars, has been working to suppress academic research related to logging's effect on climate change and has been serving as a lobbying arm for the timber industry. I support elimination and defunding of OFRI, or, in the absence of that option, a complete overhaul of its structure to ensure that it is assisting small forestland owners in a way that promotes current, sound scientific research and policy related to forestry, no longer engages in spreading propaganda about logging practices, and abstains from trying to influence politics.

I am deeply concerned about the detrimental effects of logging practices (destroying habitats, polluting rivers and streams, causing erosion, leading to more intense wildfires, etc.) and how they are accelerating climate change. A priority in Oregon now should be supporting unbiased research into climate change and how it intersects with logging practices. In light of this, OFRI's tactics of trying to stifle research, influence state policy, and intimidate scientists are distressing, not to mention an egregious violation for a public agency.

If OFRI does persist as a state agency, it should be reorganized to include members who have a background in environmental science as it relates to forestry, including issues related to how logging operations affect climate change, wildfires, wildlife, human drinking watershed quality and quantity, and stream and river health as it pertains to fish populations.

Some or all of the tax revenue that has been funding the OFRI could be better spent in green energy initiatives, including job training, and supporting residents of [timber towns that are struggling financially](#) as jobs have been eliminated due to automation and outsourcing. I would also encourage redirection of these funds into [drinking water infrastructure repairs that are necessary because of the effects of logging](#), and watershed protection in general, as well as wildfire prevention efforts.

I do acknowledge that there is a great difference between the corporate timber companies (REITs and TIMOs) and Oregon's small forestland owners, many of which are family-operated. The difference lies in the resources these two different types of entities have, as well as the impact that they have on the land they work and the communities in which they operate. I appreciate the sustainable practices these small forestland owners are dedicated to following, such as avoiding

clearcutting and aerial spraying of pesticides and herbicides, and sticking to longer harvest cycles. I understand that despite its misdeeds, OFRI has served as a source of education and support for owners of small forestlands. In a reorganization of OFRI, I applaud plans to ensure small forestland owners are supported in their efforts to manage their forests sustainably.