

February 24, 2021

House Committee on Revenue:

Re: **Continued Opposition to House Bill HB 2357 (A-Engrossed, 3-31-2021)**

Dear Chair Representative Nathanson, Vice Chairs Representatives Pham and Reschke and members of the committee:

We continue to be opposed to HB 2357. As we understand it, this bill will severely restructure the management and funding of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI), which would appear to be a “knee-jerk” reaction to recent negative publicity about it.

First, a little background about us. We are retired and we own and manage about 84 acres of forestland in western Oregon near Estacada, which we have been doing for almost 30 years. We are proud of our forest stewardship, and we were honored for our work in 2020 as the Clackamas County Farm Forestry Association’s Woodland Farmer of the Year, were awarded the joint ODFW/ODF “Fish & Wildlife Steward Award for Forest Lands” in 2020 and are certified by the American Tree Farm System due to, among other things, implementing standards of sustainability in accordance with the American Forest Foundation.

We view OFRI as an informational resource. Much of their information is free to the public. We support most of their informational activities. OFRI produces a number of professional, well-written and informative documents, of which we have studied many. OFRI is the forest community’s commodity commission and is funded solely by forest landowners through the Oregon Forest Harvest Tax. No monies from Oregon’s General Fund are used. Much of OFRI’s successes come from the many partnerships it has developed with agencies and organizations that share the goal of healthy, productive working forests in Oregon.

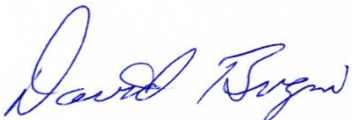
In our opinion, the following steps should be implemented prior to considering the elimination of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute:

1. The future disposition of OFRI should wait until Gov. Brown’s audit of this institute is completed.
2. Once the audit is completed, any recommended changes should be implemented by the OFRI.
3. If such changes have not been implemented within a mutually agreed to timeframe, then consideration of further action should be undertaken.

In summary, we find that this latest version of HB 2357 should be withdrawn from further consideration, as such drastic action is not needed at this time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



David & Mary Ann Bugni
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