



Hancock
Forest
Management®

TO: Chair Nathanson
Members of the House Revenue Committee

FROM: Cindy Robert for Hancock Forest Management

DATE: May 10, 2021

RE: Opposition to HB 2357

You heard today repetition of criticism from one series of news articles that has led to HB 2357...the most recurring thread is that OFRI supported and applauded an industry that not all think should be praised.

That is why we are here.

I have spent my 30 plus years as a lobbyist trying to train myself not to react but to respond. I am concerned that this bill is a reaction and I urge you to consider a response.

I agree with the need to modernize OFRI. After all, they were created in 1991 – a lot has changed since then – not just in the industry, but in communication technology, schools, small businesses, and forests – areas where OFRI's efforts are aimed. Additionally, new issues need addressing that should be added to OFRI's vision - like workforce and wildfire.

So, we should take the criticism and respond by improving the institute – not decimating it – which in reality is what HB 2357 does.

Your Agriculture and Natural Resources committee would tell you that the largest need and benefit they heard about during testimony was from small woodland owners. This bill moves the much-needed education of these small businesspeople to ODF. But ODF is a regulator, not an educator.

And our population growth means a lot of newcomers who know nothing of the industry. Seems like that makes the case for educating Oregonians of all ages about forests and forestry.

But the bill also takes away OFRI's ability to advertise. Again, demolition rather than a remodel. Allow OFRI to tell the public here and throughout the world about Oregon timber, the backbone of our economy, and about Oregon wood products. Add some sideboards, but in doing so remember these facts:

- OFRI is the timber industry's commodity commission – it may not have been placed in statute or written the way the Dairy Products Commission or wheat or hazelnut or beef commissions were written but it was created for the same purpose.
- Only timberland owners pay the tax that funds OFRI. I do not pay it. You do not pay it. Most your constituents do not pay it.
- All other commodity commissions advertise the product paying the bill.
I have added to the record a research piece on Oregon's Commodity Commissions.

I ask you to respond to the criticism, not react to it. And Hancock Forest Management looks forward to helping find constructive solutions.