

Dear Chair Nathanson and members of the Committee:

I am testifying in support of 2357 because the Oregon Forest Resources Institute does not present sound or responsible scientific information to our schools and the general public. I support the idea of prohibiting OFRI from engaging in "generalized advertising for public education."

I also support redirecting half of the timber tax to support climate science, reporting and monitoring of pesticide use in forest operations, and adaptive management driven by research. I have the following comments:

Support for climate science and climate smart forestry. We need to know the amount of forest carbon that is emitted by logging in Oregon. We cannot begin to reduce emissions unless we know what our impact is on the climate. Enhanced reporting and monitor use of toxic chemicals in our forests. ODF needs to disclose the amount of chemicals it uses, and those used by industry. The use of chemicals is impacting our drinking water, shellfish, salmon, terrestrial and aquatic life. Adaptive management. We need ODF to help landowners address the fire risk from private industrial forest operations. We also need to focus our resources on protecting homes and communities.

Issues with the Oregon Forest Resources Institute

OFRI markets pro-timber propaganda as curriculum for schools: OFRI's forestry curriculum cherry picks forest science and skews information to cast industry as benign. OFRI's curriculum underplays the impacts of clearcut logging and presents timber industry messaging points as forest facts.

OFRI misleads Oregonians with dishonest advertising: OFRI spends millions of dollars annually to push out television, radio and digital media advertisements spreading the message that Oregon's forest laws are strong. OFRI's advertisements ignore the stories of Oregonians currently experiencing the negative impacts of industrial logging, and dishonestly suggest that Oregon is a leader in environmentally sound forestry.

OFRI attempts to silence scientific research: In an attack on academic freedom, OFRI executives lobbied legislators and university officials to undermine groundbreaking forest-climate research conducted by a team of scientists at Oregon State University's College of Forestry.

OFRI's members represent Big Timber: While OFRI presents itself as a government agency, the organization is dominated by the timber industry. Among the thirteen members, OFRI's Board includes nine representatives of the forest products industry, one member representing small woodland owners and one representative of forest industry employees. The OFRI board is composed of individuals intimately involved in and dependent on the forest industry's continued success.

OFRI illegally lobbies against climate-smart forestry: As a publicly funded organization, Oregon law prohibits OFRI from lobbying. Yet, OFRI has worked to lobby against climate change legislation and stronger logging regulations to protect clean water and communities.

OFRI supports political attacks: Public employees at OFRI participated in an election campaign briefing that featured political attack ads against Governor Brown from dark money group Priority Oregon.

What We Do Want:

Climate science and climate smart forestry
Transparency in use of public funds
Independent, science-backed curriculum without OFRI as middleman
Funding for outdoor education that doesn't have to go through OFRI
Academic freedom for scientists, unbiased support for research
Forest policy informed by the best forest science
Redirect OFRI funds to benefit the state of Oregon!
OFRI has lost its social license through its long-standing disinformation campaign and its illegal, behind-the-scenes efforts to undermine public understanding of key issues. We need independent, truthful scientific information being provided to all Oregonians!

Sincerely in support of 2357,
Elaine Nelson