

May 11, 2021

House Revenue Committee

RE: Opposition of HB 2357 - A

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

My name is Mike Barsotti. I am a family forest landowner in the Lyons area, and an Oregon Department of Forestry retiree.

I submitted written testimony earlier and provided oral testimony yesterday, but feel I need to share more why I believe this bill is both bad public policy and will have a negative effect on the health of Oregon's forests.

First - bad public policy: Rep. Salinas mentioned yesterday that the authors of this bill with their HB 2357- A amendment were attempting to address the concerns of family forest landowners expressed during House Ag and Natural Resources public testimony. While that is appreciated, major shifts in public policy should be vetted before being submitted in a bill. HB 2357 Second 2 (3) has ODF moving into group education. It does not do group education. OSU Extension and OFRI do. ODF's role is one-on-one education. It does not have the staff or expertise, and building that into ODF's landowner assistance program will only duplicate what Extension and OFRI do and distract from ODF's mission.

Providing for more ODF field foresters is needed but creating funding for more positions through landowner harvest tax dollars without a discussion with landowners is not sound policy. What will be the intended and unintended consequences of such a shift? Vetting new concepts before they show up in a bill is sound policy and the way statutory changes should and are most often made.

Second – OFRI education: We heard yesterday that OFRI forest management materials are biased. I disagree. The American Tree Farm System's Standards of Sustainability are evaluated and approved by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), an umbrella organization that evaluates and endorses national forest certification systems. OFRI workshops and publications have provided me the information I need to have my forest certified as sustainable. How to provide wildlife habitat in reforested areas is one example. There are many ways to manage for healthy sustainable forests. Selecting one and saying the other approaches are biased is just false.

As an officer of OSWA and the Oregon Tree Farm System I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with the bill's authors what can be done to better assist family forest landowners improve their forests after this legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional testimony on this bill, and again I ask you to reject it.