

Seeking amendments to HB2379

As an Oregon resident for about 30 years, I've appreciated the perks of urban life in our state while enjoying seasonal forays into its magnificent countryside, but this "city mouse" wants to speak up and out for my country cousins who live and work closer to nature. I thank Representative Holvey for introducing HB 2379 as a way to the right an economic wrong in our state. Far from worrying that 2379 will have a punitive monetary effect on communities double-hit by pandemic and forest fires (as opponents illogically claim), I consider that reinstating fair corporate timber taxation (missing from Lane County during my decades here) is a way of offering a hand to those kicked off their feet repeatedly, year after year.

I hope the legislature will, through amendments to this bill, better address both tax fairness and forest practices. The loss of timber jobs due to both automation and a callous Wall Street forest management style has bankrupted some of our county's smaller towns. Dollars raised through the long-overdue return of the severance tax must do more than fight fire. Such taxes should contribute to the well-being of rural Oregon, whether that means sheriffs or libraries or job retraining and human services. They've gone long enough without *their* perks, and I blame the legislators who allowed corporations to prosper at the people's expense for so many years.

Most of us are now familiar with the term *sustainable business*. The "cradle-to-grave" concept as it relates to Northwest timber means that those who operate businesses here must leave our state as clean and safe and bio-diverse as they found it. Big Timber is producing its own "hazardous waste" in terms of silt and herbicide and disinfectant by-products. If companies want to participate in our economy let them take the responsibility for the land they cut and the watersheds we all drink from. That means cutting organizations like OFRI out of the equation; yes, let companies pay for their own PR. They also must pay for the landslides and rural/municipal water system damage that poor timber practices lead to. I expect clean water from the McKenzie and know folks upstream want that too.

Corporate operatives in Oregon want us to be grateful they're investing in our state. Our contract with them must once again bring advantage to *both* sides, financially and ecologically. I ask that you amend HB2379 to address these serious omissions. Please examine LC-89, as it addresses the big picture of an industry in flux in a state with precious resources we must hasten to protect; now is the time for thinking boldly and comprehensively. Thank you for giving serious attention to what Oregon is and what it can be, with "seven generations" thinking and fair regulations in place.

384 words