

Re: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Testimony/HAGNR>
Severance Tax Bill HB 2379 for Public hearing to House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

Thank you for the submission of this comment to expand the Severance Tax bill HB 2379.

I request that the Severance Tax Bill HB 2379:

1. Give the counties funds to support their services. Currently Josephine County where I live is one of the poorest counties in the state. Unable to raise money for services it relies on property taxes. Loss of timber taxes has resulted in poor sheriff and social services, the library now funded by individual fees and a district . The county funds its Juvenile Detention Center, CASA and veterans services by clearcutting timber thus further causing 1. loss of water and soil, 2. herbicide poisoning and increasing greenhouse gases. Severance taxes need to go to counties as property tax. The greater percentage of timber land in Josephine county is owned by investment companies whose revenue leave the county.
2. Develop a program for evaluation and enforcement of best forest practices for protection of drinking water. Give DEQ the power to enforce problems with logging roads, pesticides and steep slopes that cause drinking water to be unsafe. Quantity and quality of water has become an issue with rural communities affected by logging. The amount water in aquifers is decreasing causing wells to go dry. Last year we ran out of water and our well needed to be replaced. Timber management with short rotations and clear-cutting leads to warming of stream temperature, soil erosion and degrading of fish habitat.
3. Provide funds for fire protection for home hardening. I live in a forested area and need protection for my home such as fire proof roofing, structure changes and defensible space.
4. Reward timber companies who practice forest management that decreases timber rotations, clearcutting and best practices to decrease greenhouse gasses and improve water quality.

Thank you
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