

Our state has 23 commodity commissions. The Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) is one of them and is funded by a Forest Products Harvest Tax. As someone who is interested in our state's economy, I'm reaching out to you to ask you to vote "no" on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598.

As one of the largest industries in the state, the forest sector is part of our economic backbone, especially in rural communities. It is the number one national supplier of dimensional lumber and plywood, creates more than 60,000 family wage jobs, and is a major supporter of secondary businesses.

OFRI plays a significant role in providing professional development for teachers, as well as educational programs for students including interactive publications that meet state science, social science, math and literacy standards. It also offers many hands-on opportunities for students to learn about our state's forest lands.

Additionally, landowners, managers and operators throughout the state benefit from OFRI's landowner education programs. They are especially helpful for small woodland owners. They all use Oregon's Forest Protection Laws Manual as a guide to understand and follow the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

Public education includes county economic fact sheets, a bi-annual Oregon Forest Facts booklet, and in-depth special reports that present research on many topics from harvest methods to wildfire.

Finally, the Secretary of State's office is conducting a performance audit of OFRI, with a report expected no later than summer of 2021. No changes should be made to OFRI until the audit is complete.

Thank you for not supporting these measures and for waiting for the audit before making any decision relative to OFRI.

Liz Cawood