

Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Breese-Inversion and Hudson, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB 2357 and in support of eliminating funding for the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) and the associated Fund. The articles published this past year by Oregon Public Broadcasting, ProPublica, and The Oregonian builds a powerful argument that OFRI is managed largely, if not solely, for the benefit of the timber industry and not the benefit of all Oregonians. There are multiple reasons that OFRI should be entirely eliminated. OFRI has engaged in political lobbying in direction violation of its charter, going as far as participating in private industry deliberations about dark money attacks on politicians. OFRI has worked to undermine research from Oregon State University that showed that our timber industry is responsible for a large part of Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions. OFRI spends \$1M a year telling Oregonians that Oregon's logging laws are strong, when in reality they are demonstrably weaker than in neighboring states. Most recently we have learned of how clearcutting of the watershed that provides water to several of our rural communities has resulted in grave threats to their future drinking water. Oregon's budget issues in 2021 are well-known and significant. I urge the committee to cut OFRI's funding and redirected the funds to fire resiliency in rural communities and protection of water supply watersheds.

Sincerely,
Dr. Pat DeLaquil
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Gresham, OR