

Protect OFRI - vote NO on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598

Dear Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) Committee,

I'm writing to you today to encourage you to vote NO on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598 that either de-fund the Oregon Forest Resources Institute or eliminate it all together.

I am an elementary school teacher and have personally seen many benefits from OFRI. One of OFRI's three primary program areas is K-12 education, focusing on professional development for teachers, in-class educational programs for students, field-trip transportation reimbursement, and grade-level publications for teachers and students that correlate with state science, social science, math and literacy standards. All materials created by OFRI are free. You may have heard of some of the education programs made possible by OFRI funding like:

- **The Oregon Natural Resources Education Program** at OSU that provides free professional development for natural resources education to teachers across Oregon
- **Talk About Trees**, an in-class forestry education program for pre-K through eighth grades that reaches more than 100,000 students annually.
- **Forests Today & Forever** that offers experiential outdoor programs for youth and adults, using working tree farms and other managed forests.
- **The Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden** that provides K-12 students an opportunity to discover the importance of Oregon's forests, see forest management and understand how forests contribute to our quality of life.

Over the past several years, my students have benefitted from OFRI by participating in the Talk About Trees school presentations and field trip to Port Blakely. The students I serve attend a Title I school, many of whom have limited resources and field trips in which they need to pay is sometimes not feasible. The Talk About Trees program that is funded through OFRI has provided high quality instruction about our Oregon forests through engaging hands-on activities, including a firsthand experience walking through forests in Mollala completely free of charge.

I urge you to please vote no on these detrimental bills. Oregon's schoolchildren benefit greatly from the curriculum and literacy materials that are correlated to state standards, outdoor experiences and funding provided by OFRI's K-12 education program.

Thank you,

Rubi Hovenden  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher