

Dear Committee Chair,

My name is Corinne Walters and I live and work in McMinnville, Oregon. I am writing to you to voice my concerns about House Bill 2357. I do not support this bill and am concerned about the repercussions it would have on all Oregonians.

This bill is important to me because I cherish all of Oregon's natural resources, specifically our forested areas. A true conservationist, I believe in keeping our forests as forests and maintaining the amazing natural resource programs we have here in Oregon. I grew up in a family that to this day still relies on forestry education programs, the wood products industry, and the public's perception of forestry. The Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) provides funding for many important programs, including fact-based scientific research and natural resource education.

As a professional forester, I depend on the scientific research that the Oregon Forest Resources Institute coordinates and funds. I am honored to be a steward of our natural resources and do my best every day to do what is right for Oregonians. OFRI provides research that keeps me updated on the best possible practices for our forests, and without factual research, I would have less ability to make informed decisions about how to manage Oregon's natural resources.

As I am sure you are aware, OFRI also funds Talk About Trees, a natural resource outreach program that provides science-based education to hundreds of thousands of students every year. Not only do they meet with students in the classroom, but the facilitators go to county fairs, career events, and outdoor schools to teach our youngest generations about the importance of protecting, managing, and conserving our renewable forests. If House Bill 2357 is passed, the Talk About Trees program will cease to exist. OFRI provides the majority of funding for the Talk About Trees program and the small amount from other grants and fundraisers would not be enough to keep the program afloat. I implore you to think about what we want Oregon to look like in the next 10, 50, and 100 years and ask yourself what we can do now to ensure that our state's natural resources are protected. Education is crucial in molding how our children and grandchildren view the forests, and the influential work that Talk About Trees stands for is pivotal in educating those young generations.

Please vote no on House Bill 2357 and keep Oregon sustainably managed and a place of monumental natural beauty for decades to come. Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns and for considering the future of Oregon in the important decisions you make.

Sincerely,

Corinne Walters