

Harriet's Testimony: 3/02/21

Thank you Chair Witt and members of the committee for the privilege of offering testimony on HB 2357.

My name is Harriet Cooke, I am a semi-retired physician testifying on behalf of myself, and my faith community Havurah Climate Action Team.

This testimony is in regards to our OFRI, forest education, and revenue issues, and in particular my support for HB 2357, with a recommended amendment.

Regarding Forest education and the Oregon Forestry Research Institute:

We need forest education based on sound forest and climate science, not monetary science of how to make the greatest short-term profits and externalize the harms, or past science that was incomplete and ignores modern forest climate science. In the Feb. 23rd hearing I heard industry representatives spout the carbon sequestration of trees harvested at 40 years. Unfortunately they neglected to mention that the NET carbon data is not in sequestration, but in EMISSIONS! The carbon it takes to manage timber plantations, the soil carbon that is diminished in these practices, and the increased carbon sequestration of older trees that is lost in 40 year rotations yields a negative net carbon, contributing to the problem of climate change, not the solutions.

Additionally, younger forests require more water, and in plantations that lack older trees, they do not protect the soil from rapid desiccation or draw down moisture from the low cloud cover of our region, a function of taller, older trees.

Combined with the increased landslides and silting of the remaining streams, and aerial pesticides, our drinking water and water for fish and wildlife is greatly reduced and contaminated.

OFRI has consistently downplayed such science in favor of industrial forestry practices that maximize short term profits over optimal forests and optimal quality of wood products from older trees.

I heard it argued that these industrial practices create good wage forestry jobs. What good is a forestry wage job if it requires the poisoning of our neighbors and an unlivable climate for our children and grandchildren?

Thus, I am writing in support for HB 2357 to defund OFRI and shift our forestry education to a new fund and group, Sound Forest Practices.

I would recommend an amendment, however, in section 1. (1) b. to change the “or” to “and”, and thus read: incorporate regulation AND monitoring of pesticide use in a forest. Regulation without monitoring or monitoring without regulation seem pretty futile to me.

With regard to the actual tax amount, I agree that the funding that once went to OFRI be shifted to the development and maintenance of a new Sound Forestry Practices Institute, having it's own sub account.

The amount of the tax to be established as suggested by the State Board of Forestry, ideally in conjunction with the sustainable foresters in Oregon.

Thank you,
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