

Chairman Witt and Committee
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for HB 2357

Dear Chairman Witt, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Members of the Committee –

I am writing to encourage you to support passage of HB 2357.

Apparently, judging by the publicly available coverage in the electronic and print media, the Oregon Forestry Research Institute has acted more as a private industry association, rather than the governmental, public-interest, tax-supported entity that was promised when it was created. Repeatedly, it has placed industry interests and priorities above the general public good, sought to block dissemination of legitimate critiques of forestry practices, and without similarly rigorous studies, sought to undermine peer reviewed scientific reports. It has played down hazards to drinking water from some forestry practices which turned out to seriously affect several local communities' water supply and quality.

HB 2357 recognizes that OFRI has acted counter to the public interest so much that it should be closed down, which does not necessarily mean the same for all of the functions it performs, some of which have good public educational purposes in schools or communities. In Section 1 of the bill, it gives leeway to the Forestry Department to use the transferred funds to continue programs or functions the Department deems to further the purposes of promoting forest health and other legitimate purposes.

Thank you to the sponsors for introducing this legislation.