

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you to encourage a "No" vote on HB 2357. This bill will eliminate the funding OFRI provides for the Talk About Trees program in education. As a public elementary school teacher, my students and I have had the opportunity to experience and learn from the Tree Talks. As a teacher in a rural school, opportunities for fieldtrips and guest speakers are rare, very exciting, and beneficial for the students. Our Tree Talk was very engaging, educational, and related to the educational standards at each grade level. The presenter was professional, knowledgeable, and passionate about her subject of trees, life science, and the opportunities for jobs in natural resources. The hands-on lesson from the "Tree Lady" is a treasured memory for many students.

The OFRI curriculum and resources are available to all teachers. Their efforts during the challenging pandemic teaching of delivering instruction online have been greatly appreciated. Just as we had to adjust our curriculum to try to meet the needs of our students during this unprecedented time, so did OFRI. Their educational resources and materials are free and available to all educators. They adapted to presenting their material in a digital format.

Forestry and the benefits of timber and the timber industry are valuable to all Oregonians. My elementary students certainly benefitted from the OFRI funded educational resources and it would be a shame for this program to no longer be available to Oregon's future.

Sincerely,
Sara Kollen