

## **Opposition to House Bill 2357**

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee

Our names are Wylda and Steve Cafferata and we live and vote in Lane County. Together we own and manage the Cafferata Family Forest LLC, which comprises 350 acres in Lane, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. We saved for the first 45 years of our marriage to purchase this land, and now our children and grandchildren work with us to manage it sustainably.

In several ways, Oregon Forest Resources Institute has been and continues to be an enormous help to us. The following list is not exhaustive.

- OFRI supports the Master Woodland Manager Program. Over the course of several months, Wylda spent weekends in the woods with forestry professionals learning about timber, water, wildlife, and recreation both from an on-the-ground management perspective and at policy level. These forestry professionals represented academia, the private, and the public sector, and their scientific presentations covered multiple perspectives. As a professional forester, Steve volunteers with the program.
- OFRI supports the WOWnet Program-Women Owning Woodlands. Forty percent of Oregon's small woodlands are owned by women. WOWnet gives them a seat at the table and a voice in the room. It is not that forest management is seen by Oregon woodland owners as a male prerogative, but rather that, historically, men have taken the lead. WOWnet gives many women landowners, Wylda included, the confidence to join management and policy discussions. All Oregonians benefit from this broader perspective.
- OFRI provides an extensive library of educational materials. We keep their illustrated Guide to Oregon Forest Practice Laws handy for easy reference. It may be the most helpful publication for on-the-ground management activities in Oregon. It has been revised twice since the original publication to keep it up-to-date. We have their entire series of publications on wildlife management as well.
- OFRI sponsors several Neighbor-to-Neighbor Tours each year where small woodland owners visit each other's property to compare and contrast management strategies. We have been on several of these invaluable tours, and hosted one.
- OFRI funds transportation for natural-resource based field trips. We volunteer with a Lane County not-for-profit organization, Forests Today & Forever, that brings over 1600 middle school students to the woods each year for field days. Some of these students tell us that these are their first trips to the woods.
- OFRI helps coordinate Tree School, where hundreds of Oregonians come, in person and on-line, to learn skills to improve the health of Oregon's forests. Their efforts in 2020 to change to virtual presentations due to the pandemic made a huge difference to small woodland owners.

- OFRI provides K-12 natural resource educational materials, hosts the Envirathon, a forestry skills contest for high school teams, and manages the Discovery Forest at the Oregon Gardens where thousands of students come to learn.
- OFRI provides expertise to the privately funded Oregon Natural Resource Education Fund which makes grants to high school natural resource teachers.
- OFRI supports the Talk about Trees program that reaches 140,000 Oregon children.
- OFRI provides professional development for Oregon's K-12 natural resource teachers.
- OFRI helps provide leadership to the Oregon and National Society of American Foresters.
- OFRI provides expertise to the Oregon Department of Forestry. As an example, their staff helped design an informational sign display for the Forest Grove District, and produced a very practical publication on slash abatement and management.

As you may know, there have been what we consider some unfounded allegations in the popular press that OFRI has stepped over the line into advocacy, so that OFRI is now under audit by the Secretary of State. The results of that audit are predicted to be issued this coming June, and surely OFRI should be considered innocent unless proven guilty. If indeed that line was crossed, which we do not believe, some lesser penalty than defunding and disbanding should be considered in the light of all the good OFRI does.

Finally, we remind you that OFRI does not draw on the General Fund. It is funded by the harvest tax that forest owners ourselves pay when we harvest.

OFRI is invaluable to small woodland owners and should not be defunded.

Thank you for your consideration.

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