

I'm writing to you today to encourage you to vote NO on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598 that either de-fund the Oregon Forest Resources Institute or eliminate it all together.

I am a public school teacher and have personally benefited from OFRI by being able to have my 4th graders participate in the Forests Today & Forever program for the last 12 years. Students learn about sustainable forestry and the impact this has in their everyday lives. Teaching in a rural community where the budgeting crisis has greatly impacted curriculum and experiences that I can provide to my students that can still be related to state standards has been a challenge to say the least. With the Forest Today & Forever program, I have been able over the last 12 years to impact the lives of 360 of my students. This experiential outdoor program has allowed these 360 kids to experience a forest through the lens of a different ecosystem in which they live in as well as how sustainable forestry impacts their daily lives through wood produced products and how trees help in carbon capture. For my students, as well as their parents, the depth of knowledge gained in this experience is vital and the interactive format is much more than I could ever provide for them as a teacher. I have also had the privilege to have both my own children participate in this program with me and it truly has impacted their lives. We have the privilege to live near one of the managed forests and in a similar ecosystem. The information they have gained has impacted the way we live on our own timber property and as well as when we explore other forests hiking in our great state of Oregon. I know that as a property owner near one of Port Blakely's farm sites and seeing the busses bringing in the school children that participate in this program brings great pride to our little community in the Meadowbrook area. I gladly share my voice not only as a teacher but as a community neighbor to help support voting no on HB 2357, 2379 and 2598. Below I have shared more information about the OFRI primary programs to help educate you more beyond my personal testimony.

One of OFRI's three primary program areas is K-12 education, focusing on professional development for teachers, in-class educational programs for students, field-trip transportation reimbursement, and grade-level publications for teachers and students that correlate with state science, social science, math and literacy standards. All materials created by OFRI are free. You may have heard of some of the education programs made possible by OFRI funding like:

The Oregon Natural Resources Education Program at OSU that provides free professional development for natural resources education to teachers across Oregon

Talk About Trees, an in-class forestry education program for pre-K through eighth grades that reaches more than 100,000 students annually.

Forests Today & Forever that offers experiential outdoor programs for youth and adults, using working tree farms and other managed forests.

The Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden that provides K-12 students an opportunity to discover the importance of Oregon's forests, see forest management and understand how forests contribute to our quality of life.

I urge you to please vote no on these detrimental bills. Oregon's schoolchildren benefit greatly from the curriculum and literacy materials that are correlated to state standards, outdoor experiences and funding provided by OFRI's K-12 education program.

Thank you,

Christy Miller (4th grade teacher and property owner near Port Blakely Tree Farm Molalla Site)