

I am writing this testimony in support of HB 2357. For three decades, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) has used tax dollars to promote the logging industry. Though chartered to educate Oregonians about the state's logging laws and expressly prohibited from lobbying, OFRI has consistently worked to undermine scientific research, oppose reform efforts, and mislead Oregonians about the effectiveness of our forest laws in protecting critical resources like clean water and wildlife habitat.

A recent investigative report from OPB, The Oregonian, and ProPublica laid bare some damning evidence against OFRI:

OFRI has been lobbying illegally - they helped to coordinate an industry lobby day in 2019 and worked behind the scenes to keep forest protection solutions out of the state's climate change proposal. OFRI has worked to silence scientific research - after groundbreaking forest climate research conducted by faculty at Oregon State University's College of Forestry was published in the prestigious Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, OFRI executives lobbied legislators and university officials to convince them that the research was flawed. The study's author called it an attack on academic freedom. OFRI executives plotted with dark money political groups - public employees at OFRI participated in an election campaign briefing that featured political attack ads against Governor Brown from dark money group Priority Oregon.

OFRI's advertising misleads Oregonians - as an arm for the logging industry, OFRI spends tax dollars to mislead Oregonians to believe that our logging laws are strong even in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary. Oregon's logging laws are the weakest on the West Coast and communities that rely on healthy forests for their clean drinking water have been paying the price. Even as Oregon has lost out on millions of dollars in federal grants explicitly because of our weak logging laws, OFRI ads have specifically touted how Oregon's laws protect water quality.

For these reasons, I am urging you to pass HB 2357. Thank you, Michael Heumann, Portland, Oregon, 97218