

February 7, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Water and Natural Resources  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition to HB 3019

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elisa Turpen and I live in Newberg, OR. My family has several small tree farms and with the succession plan, I will eventually become an owner. I would like you to know that I oppose HB 3019 that would severely limit the funding of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI).

Our tree farms are certified and have management plans where we consider clean water, wood, recreation and wildlife. OFRI helps us to appropriately manage our forest. Forest land in Oregon has many rules and regulations that are in place to protect water, wildlife, land use issues, and continued replanting of any harvested land. In order for me to comply with these regulations once it comes time for me to manage this land, I will need relevant, accurate, and well researched information. OFRI is the best source of this information.

The landowner educational programs provided by OFRI are particularly important at this point in time as the changes to Oregon's forest practices regulations due to the passage of the Private Forest Accord will necessitate educating ourselves to be in compliance with these new regulations. OFRI is currently funded through the Forest Products Harvest Tax which is paid only by timber growers and receives no general fund dollars. It would be wrong of this legislature to change the funding of OFRI and/or reduce their ability to provide vital education to landowners and the public. If you were to defund OFRI, my young children would also miss out on a valuable K-12 forest education resource program which OFRI provides.

As the saying goes, if it's not broken, don't fix it. OFRI is not broken, so do not try to fix it.

Please vote against HB 3019 or any bill to eliminate or change OFRI.

Sincerely,

Elisa Turpen