

Submitter: Whitney Henneman

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: HB3019

Good afternoon Chair Helm and members of the committee.

For the record my name is Whitney Schimke and I am a forester for a small family-owned timber company, Silver Butte Timber Company based out of Riddle. I manage 45,000 acres of timberland in Coos, Douglas and Jackson counties.

I live in the heart of Oregon's wood basket with my husband and our little girl, and I can say with conviction that the forest products sector is the economic backbone of communities like mine. Our industry is a supplier of more than 60,000 family wage jobs, mostly in rural counties, and a major supporter of secondary businesses. I have the privilege of working and living in a community with families just like mine- my husband is a second generation forester and I'm a third- and one of the greatest hopes I have for my daughter is for her to find a passion in natural resources and help contribute to an industry invested in growing forests forever.

If you look up OFRI's statute, it says the Institute was created as an acknowledgement that the welfare of the state is dependent on the vitality of our sector. Our sector remains vital to Oregon today and, just like the other 25 grower-supported commissions in Oregon from blueberries to beef, warrants an organization like OFRI that effectively serves as our sector's commodity commission. Funded exclusively by those who harvest timber, OFRI's mission is to support and enhance Oregon's forest products industry, just like all the other commissions. Make no mistake, House Bill 3019 is an effort to take what serves as our commodity commission away from us by eviscerating its budget and eliminating its core functionality. I'm sure you'll hear testimony today about how this bill makes OFRI better, or better aligns it with other commissions. That's not what this is about and we all know it. It's about silencing our ability to promote the good things the forest products sector does for Oregon. Please do not support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.