

February 8, 2023
Representative Ken Helm, Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Water and Natural Resources

Re: Opposition to HB3019

Dear Representative Helm and fellow committee members,

My name is Chris Culbertson, a resident of Washington County. I am writing today in opposition to HB3019 that would eliminate funding for The Oregon Forest Resources Institute. Our family has owned and managed several small tracts of forest land in Oregon's coastal mountains for more than two decades. The family forests provide a variety of natural habitat, clean water, and renewable forest products.

Three generations of our family are involved in caring for these lands that we conscientiously tend for future generations. It's our goal that our property will be part of our family heritage for many generations; enjoyed and valued as it is today. We intentionally manage for long-term sustainable outcomes that are a benefit to our community.

OFRI is an honest and science-based organization. It plays a vital role in research, education, and workshops on forest management. OFRI's partnership with groups like the Oregon Small Woodlands Association and the Women Owning Woodlands Network present tours and seminars focused for Oregon's 60,000 small forest owners. OFRI produces relevant and well researched reports that assist small woodland owners like our family by promoting best practices. OFRI support of training "Master Woodland Managers" in concert with OSU Extension promotes the message of maintaining healthy forests across the entire state. OFRI's K-12 educational programs partner, assist and support outdoor school programs in instruction about forests role in our natural world.

OFRI's efforts are funded exclusively by proceeds from the Forest Products Harvest Tax. As timber growers we have agreed to tax ourselves as trees are harvested to pay for the OFRI program. For OFRI's detractors to claim abuse of General Tax Fund Dollars is disingenuous and simply untrue.

We strongly support OFRI and its very responsible science based educational mission. OFRI serves a valuable, sensible, and critical role in education about forests that cover almost one-half of the state. Without reservation I urge you to oppose HB3019 and other extreme legislation that propose to de-fund and eliminate the important work done by OFRI.

Sincerely,

Chris Culbertson