

Chair Helms and the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

I am writing in opposition to HB 3019. This written testimony is in support of spoken testimony given at Thursday, Feb 9's hearing.

My wife and I purchased a small woodland property in Vida in Lane County in April 2019. In July, we packed up our lives in California to live our forest dream retirement.

We came here loving the woods from years as hikers and backpackers and parks supporters and environmentalists. We hoped to stay in shape working to keep our 39 acres of woodland healthy. It didn't take too long to realize that we didn't know the first thing about how to care for a woodland. Walking along maintained (sometimes not-so-maintained) trails on public lands gave us ample opportunity to appreciate the beauty of the woods, but didn't offer us many skills in understanding what we were seeing.

We quickly discovered OSU Extension and their fabulous forestry programs around the state. A part of many Extension forestry programs are OFRI publications. A huge part of our ongoing education has been OFRI publications, OFRI programs, OFRI web pages, OFRI partnerships. A new landowner needs the resources OFRI provides. A long time landowner can only benefit from OFRI's offerings. OFRI puts out the best of scientific understanding in an accessible format that empowers landowners to make the best choices for their land based on their objectives and the particular circumstances of their land. While it seems environmental groups in Oregon want to dictate what we can do on our land, no OFRI materials have ever assumed to know what is best for an individual's woodland.

Early in our time in Oregon, we were greeted with OPB and Pro Publica pieces about "the timber industry." As long time supporters of public broadcasting and long time citers of Pro Publica, we were astounded at the slant that even we, as new woodland owners, could detect. We hesitantly asked new acquaintances for elucidation. Members of "the timber industry" knew these hatchet jobs were coming, but elected not to respond. We listened to personal refutations of each point raised in some of those articles. Further personal experience of timber companies supported those refutations.

Particularly disturbing were reports about OFRI. OFRI had become essential to our education in caring for our forest. Was OFRI, as OPB and PP would have it, just a shill for the for-profit murderers of trees and no better than any mob family? We researched, cross referenced, and researched some more. We discovered, to our chagrin, that neither OPB nor Pro Publica were more trustworthy than any of the newspapers that covered any of our events (in previous lives) with shocking inaccuracy. "The timber industry" was the evil enemy, and anyone who supported it or participated in it in any way was also evil. (Curiously, this did not include any of the public who, you know, use wood products.) This was a deep sadness for us and also a bit de-stabilizing: if public broadcasting and Pro Publica (Pro Publica! Pro Publica is the gold standard in unearthing malfeasance against the powerless!) were so...questionable in their reporting, how many people in our past lives might we have led astray based on information provided by these sources?

And this highlighted an Oregon reality: the timber industry, small woodland owners, loggers, foresters, mill owners/workers...we're the powerful bad guys. Oregon Wild emails have spoken about foresters only seeing value in trees at the end of a chain saw (the borderline libel and the falsehoods in this rhetorical flourish are stupefying). We want only to rape the land and profit from that. And anyone who wants to profit in any way off of that gross mischaracterization—with follows, or a seat at the political table, or a bill moving through the legislative process, or clicks on an article—gets an unquestioned pass. (Was there a single Betsy Johnson article last

year that did not describe her as a timber heiress?) Meanwhile, those of us who are part of the sustainable management of our precious woodlands—which produce carbon storing wood products like, I dunno, lumber for homes—are working hard, always learning, loving our forests, and painted as overly influential villains the poor(!) brave environmentalists are trying to keep from murdering trees and destroying our forests forever. This narrative obfuscates the outsized influence and funding of the environmental industrial complex in the state.

Through all this, our education as stewards of a small forest land continued. When we first met with our stewardship forester (a smart move for all woodland owners), he arrived to our meeting with a stack of OFRI materials. OFRI's illustrated guide to the Forest Practices Act and its requirements of us as stewards of our woodland was far more comprehensible than the newsprint booklet of rules and regulations (rules and regulations which a staff person at Oregon Wild told us did not exist). The new FPA will probably only be comprehensible to most of us small landowners once OFRI has published the new illustrated guide. And while we eagerly await ODF's new Small Woodland Owner office(s), their primary focus is likely still to be on helping us understand regulations regarding forest activities requiring notification. OFRI, on the other hand, offers education on the entire forest lifecycle and how we might support its health and flourishing. This is essential as a harvest is, for many small woodland owners, a once in a lifetime event. It (and checking on required reforestation) might be the only time we interact with a stewardship forester. Our woodlands and their health and care, on the other hand, occupy our thoughts and energies all the time. Thus the ongoing importance of OFRI.

OFRI's essential part of our education as responsible stewards of our woodland is part of what made the harvest tax on our post-Holiday Farm fire salvage harvest less onerous. After taxes, our salvage harvest barely paid for our (first) replant (we're on our third)—but at least a portion of our harvest tax dollars went to OFRI.

OFRI does not deserve to be financially strangled by diverting harvest tax dollars to other entities. OFRI has responded to the concerns raised by the SoS audit. Indeed, most of the charges levied against OFRI's embodiment of its mission were charges that should have been levied against the legislature for establishing OFRI to be a commodity commission—but not entirely. The audit--the audit itself, not the bullet points which were oddly not very reflective of the audit itself--was pretty supportive. OFRI's science based education seems objectionable primarily to people and groups whose starting point is that no one should ever cut a tree. That is a more problematic stance than the responsible stewardship enabled by OFRI, and a stance that all evidence indicates is held by the Wild organizations and by Dr. Law, whose research, oft-cited by Mr. Stevens and by Dr. Law herself, has numerous holes. Dr. Law absolutely does not have to design research to account for environmental destruction in other states or countries should we stop logging in Oregon (aka "leakage"); nor does she have to account for the release of carbon in megafires (which she has deemed not an ongoing threat). Unfortunately, acting as if there won't be negative national and global environmental effects if Oregon imports wood products from places with more lax forest rules, and failing to account for the effect of thousands of acres of neglected forestlands that are burned, and not publicly owning the choice to not account for that, is either lazy or disingenuous. Accordingly, given the outsized influence of "the environmental community," appointing a representative of "the environmental community" to OFRI's Board of Directors is absurd. (N.B: Even I, while highly critical of late capitalist society, find myself suspicious of the underlying anti-capitalist, anti-private property, anti-property rights agenda of some of Oregon's environmental groups. The proposed Watershed Bill of Rights in Lane County is a good example of that unspoken agenda.)

I have harped on Oregon Wild because Sean Stevens, has, in my limited experience with Oregon's long legislative session, frequently been one of the official testifiers on OFRI—and because my limited experience with Oregon Wild is that they are...well, I was a staunch

environmentalist before I met them. I have harped on Dr. Beverly Law because I have seen evaluations of her study and for that study, with its extreme limitations, to become something that guides Oregon forest policy is unnecessarily limiting. And while Dr. Law may be hurt and angry about OFRI and OSU responses to her research, OFRI has changed and moved on and, sad as it is for all of us who believe we have been treated unfairly, so must Dr. Law.

I urge you not to support HB 3019 moving forward. I also urge you not to assume that Oregon Wild and Dr. Law are more representative of concern for our forests than are any of us who actually care for, and not just about, them. I urge you to instead support OFRI in their support of forest landowners in our efforts to be responsible forest stewards who know and implement best practices for Oregon's forests. I invite any of you on this committee to visit my woodland to see not-anti-harvest conservation in action. And I'm happy to discuss how this California progressive has found a fitting home with Oregon's forestry and timber community.

Thank you for your time.

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