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February 19, 2024

RE: SB 1593

Chair Meek and members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose SB 1593. The bill has been amended under the guise of a "study" for long-term wildfire funding. However, the language of the amendment makes it abundantly clear that this is a scripted effort to lay the groundwork for passing a severance tax concept in 2025. Not only is a severance tax ill-suited for taxing a renewable resource like timber, but it is also unjust to burden one sector disproportionately for a problem that affects all Oregonians. Furthermore, the forestry industry already bears a significant financial burden for fire prevention and suppression, exacerbated by recent costly investments due to legislation like the Private Forest Accord.

Moreover, the proposal for another costly study bill is unnecessary, especially considering the \$250,000 study on wildfire funding commissioned by the Legislature in 2020, which the sponsor of SB 1593 voted in favor of. It is unjustifiable to spend more taxpayer dollars aiding a legislator's anti-forestry agenda, particularly when it aims to further tax a sector already burdened with disproportionately higher taxes than other businesses. I urge you to oppose this poorly conceived bill.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Beathe

Forester

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Corvallis, Oregon