

February 24, 2024

Re: SB 1593 or 1593-1

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair Boquist, and other members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue, Sens. Golden, Findley, and Jama,

I am writing in support of either SB 1593 or amendment -1. I am a member of the COIN Climate Energy and Environment Team (CEE) and the COIN Legislative Team and live on Oregon's beautiful north coast in Clatsop County. I applaud the legislative sponsors for putting forth this bill which would either reinstate timber severance taxes on larger timber owners to fund wildfire protection programs, watershed protection and enhancement, and our local communities that have been devastated by loss of severance tax revenue. Or, under the amendment -1, the bill would establish a work group to study the reinstatement of severance taxes eliminated in the 1990s for timber harvested on public and private land.

Small woodlands owners would be protected under SB 1593 as it only applies to woodlands owners with more than 500 acres. And the taxes are tiered so that only the largest timber owners pay a capped rate of 6%, a more than fair assessment to share the burden of revitalizing local communities that support and surround timber operations profiting from local natural resources, protecting waterways, drinking water, and land impacted by logging operations; and developing wildlife mitigation and protection programs that benefit timber owners as well.

A reinstatement of severance taxes would replace the current Forest Products Harvest tax and bring in significantly more revenue. Alternatively, the amendment -1 would authorize the study group to evaluate the distribution of funds from these taxes for wildfire protection including reducing community risk and preparedness, watershed restoration and other forestry programs, and local governments and communities devastated when severance taxes were eliminated in the 1990s.

For more information on the long history of tax cuts given to the timber industry and its Wall Street investors in the 1990s and the devastating effects on our communities, workers, and families, [please read the investigation by ProPublica, Oregon Public Broadcasting and The Oregonian/OregonLive.](#)

This bill is an important step towards a much more equitable and reasonable way to fund wildfire protection and other forest programs, watershed protection, and our local governments. I urge you to vote yes on SB 1593 or Amendment -1. Thank you.

Laura Allen, Seaside