

Submitter: Joshua Estes  
On Behalf Of: Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers  
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue  
Measure: SB1593

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

"Here we go again!" This exclamation has become all too familiar within the forestry products industry, signaling yet another legislative challenge that threatens the livelihoods of thousands of Oregonians. My name is Josh Estes, representing the voices and concerns of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Union (AWPPW), which encompasses more than 3,500 members across the Pacific Northwest, notably in Oregon and Washington. Our members are the lifeblood of an industry that has not only provided family-wage jobs for generations but has also played a pivotal role in the economic fabric of our rural communities.

SB 1593, which proposes a study to explore the imposition of a severance tax on timber, fundamentally misunderstands the nature of our renewable industry and the detrimental effects such a tax could have. Timber is not merely a commodity; it is the cornerstone of our members' livelihoods, sustainably harvested and replanted to ensure the health and prosperity of Oregon's forests for generations to come.

The forestry sector contributes significantly to Oregon's economy, offering more than just jobs—it supports entire communities. Introducing a severance tax, as suggested by the study proposed in SB 1593, threatens to undermine this vital industry, leading to job losses, mill closures, and economic hardship in areas already struggling to maintain their economic vitality.

Our industry is already heavily taxed, with numerous fees and taxes associated with timber harvesting and forest management. The proposed study and the potential severance tax it aims to explore would only serve to further burden an industry that is integral to Oregon's economy and the well-being of its rural communities.

I speak from personal experience when I say that the announcement of a mill shutdown is devastating. Ten years ago, I lived through such an announcement, alongside 800 of my colleagues. The impact of that closure still resonates deeply within our community, a stark reminder of the real consequences legislative decisions can have on the lives of working Oregonians.

Therefore, I implore you, Chair Meek and esteemed members of the committee, to consider the far-reaching implications of SB 1593. We must not waste resources on a study that could lead to further challenges for an industry already facing significant pressures. Instead, let us direct our efforts towards supporting sustainable forestry

practices and policies that bolster the economy and protect the jobs of those who have dedicated their lives to this industry.

Thank you for your consideration of our stance on this critical issue. The AWPPW remains committed to engaging in meaningful dialogue to find solutions that ensure the continued prosperity of Oregon's forestry products industry and the communities it supports.

Sincerely,

Josh Estes,  
Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Union (AWPPW)