

Chair: Senator Mark Meek  
Vice-Chair: Senator Brian Boquist  
Members: Senators Findley, Golden, and Jama

Re: Opposition to SB 1593

February 27, 2024

Dear Chair Meek and members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue:

Many elements of SB 1593 will have disproportionate and adverse effects to small forest landowners in Oregon.

Elimination of funding for Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) is of particular concern. With the implementation of Private Forest Accord changes to the Forest Practices Act this is a critical and important time to communicate and explain the many new technical details. OFRI is really the only organization with experience providing clear explanations to complex forestry issues. OFRI publications are the “go to” source of information for small forest landowners.

Establishing exclusive lower tax rates based on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification is not fair. Other 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification standards like American Tree Farm Certification would not receive the same tax treatment. There is no evidence that FSC is superior to Tree Farm certification but Tree Farm provides a low economic hurdle for rural landowners to become certified and practice responsible forest management.

The value tax approach of the bill would increase the incentive to grow low value timber compared to higher value (and often older) trees. The current tax system currently works and allows the landowner to choose a variety of management options, from harvesting younger trees to also growing old growth trees without a value penalty. That feeling of ownership and having the ability to make decisions about the forest is important to maintain an interest in forestland ownership.

Please do not pass SB 1593 out of committee.

Yours truly,

David Wells  
Tillamook, OR