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On Behalf Of:

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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3489

I think it's a mistake for small woodland owners to align with private industrial ownerships on this. Especially those who live rural on their timberland. Those large industrial ownerships contribute so little to the government services that bring benefit to rural life and life in general. Those services include roads, education, police and fire protection. A severance tax would contribute to providing these government services where the effects of the industrial timber operations are most evident. Over years the timber industry has successfully lobbied for tax law favorable to themselves. Property taxes on timberland are negligible, severance tax was largely eliminated, and corporate income tax has been evaded with the R.E.I.T. designation which funnels profits through the corporation to the shareholders who are scattered all over the world and have no particular interest in the effects on local residents and infrastructure where they extract the raw materials they profit from. These large companies are law abiding under the laws they had a large hand in passing. Their efficiency and productivity are laudable but financial benefit is focused on owners and shareholders and the costs are left behind for rural residents in the form of failing roads and bridges, compromised watersheds and underfunded education, police and fire protection. With increasing mechanization, rural blue-collar jobs are declining and our communities suffer.

I have no particular problem with OFRI as long as it's seen as a public relations organization promoting industrial style timber management. However, I suspect it's clever presentation deceives many into believing it is unbiased science. Thank you for your consideration.