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OFRI Audit Misrepresents Oregon Forestry Industry to Advance Political Agenda

SALEM, Ore. – The Secretary of State released an audit today of the Oregon Forestry Resources Institute.

OFRI has been targeted with increasing scrutiny in recent years from a coordinated effort by political interests seeking to abolish or seize control of the forest industry in Oregon. The audit incorrectly characterized OFRI as a government agency rather than what it is: a body funded by private landowner dollars created to educate the public on the responsible management of Oregon’s largest renewable natural resource.

OFRI provides vital services for the forestry industry, just like other commodity commissions. Included in the audit are overreaching recommendations for legislative changes which exceed the appropriate scope of the Secretary of State’s audit function. These include stacking OFRI’s membership with environmentalists that lack knowledge of practical forestry, limiting the number of people with working experience.

“This audit is just another attempt to give a patina of legitimacy to efforts to remake OFRI into another taxpayer-funded environmental advocacy group,” said Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod (R-Lyons). “All one has to do to see through that is read the report. The Secretary of State uses debate around legal language to justify completely reclassifying OFRI as a government agency. That’s simply a power play to get more control over the forest products industry. I will be introducing legislation in the 2022 short session to clarify OFRI’s purpose and ensure that they are treated the same as any other commodities commission. Oregon’s economy depends on a vibrant forestry industry.”

“OFRI promotes the responsible management of Oregon’s forests in order to support 50,000 family-wage jobs while reducing the potential for catastrophic wildfires,” added House Republican Leader Christine Drazan (R-Canby). “This audit is another attempt in a coordinated effort by political interests who want to end the timber products industry in Oregon. They are fundamentally opposed to continuing our legacy as a global leader in sustainable forestry practices. This will put more families and communities at risk from unnaturally large wildfires. Turning our backs on our natural environment by neglecting our forests is not an Oregon value. In fact, it’s the worst thing we could do.”

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