Higher timber taxes not the answer

BY Bob Zybach

I am in full agreement with Bill Barton of the Native Forest Council's characterization of the recent award of $740 million over the next four years to Oregon's timber counties as 'federal welfare' (guest viewpoint, Oct. 21). Very little of that money will be used to create much-needed tax-producing jobs, and none of it would be necessary at all, if only our federal lands were better managed.

I disagree with virtually everything else Barton states, however, and the manner with which he states it.

Barton's basic argument is that, because the federal dollars equal about $10 per year for each of the 18 million acres of federal forestlands in Oregon, and because private forestlands pay about $1.25 per year tax on each of their 11 million acres, private lands should start paying more taxes and stop exporting timber. That, he says, will help finance schools and roads and allow federal lands to 'recover.'</n>