

TO: Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development

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I wish to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony concerning the Barry Point Fire of the summer of 2012 in Lake County Oregon. I have tried to be brief and to the point as much as possible. The fire started August 5, 2012 several miles west of our Drews Valley cattle ranch. It burned on to our property the afternoon of August 9, 2012.

I would like to inform you of several things:

#1--Last November I paid my taxes to the Oregon Department of Forestry for fire protection. The taxed totaled over \$6,700.00 for one year.

#2—We had a dozer and 3 men on the fire which I operated or paid operators. We built 4 miles of new fence to section off the burned area in order to continue grazing the cattle.

#3—Last fall we ordered 50,000 two year old trees which we paid for. The cost of the trees and the planting of the trees is over \$30,000.00. If we do not have an approved number of living trees per acre, according to ODF rules, we will have to plant again at our expense.

#4—The ODFW furnished some seed for planting in the “hottest” area of the burn. We paid for the helicopter to plant the seed and were later partially federally reimbursed for our planting expenses.

#5--Any other seeding or spraying of noxious weeds will be at our own expense.

#6--We are forced to decrease cattle numbers for several years to allow the burned range to recover.

#7—We have not been reimbursed for our damaged gate or for the two bulls which were trapped in the backfire north of DP 100.

#8—The fire burned almost 3000 acres of our private land. The fire started August 5 and burned east, entering our property the afternoon of August 9. I asked ODF how many N-S fire lines were put in between Barry Point (start of fire) and our property line. They could not tell me. The correct answer would be none. They did not fight the fire!

The lines constructed (only partially) the afternoon of August were only a feeble attempt to slow the fire and were totally ineffective.

I could continue in great detail. However, in short, I was the only one on the north end of the fire on August 9. No Forest Service or ODF personal were present. On August 10th we built lines with our dozer starting at 6 AM. We finished work on our private land at approximately 9:20 AM, and after an ODF dozer operator (it took a phone call to get him) showed up, we directed him as to where he should build the line to the east. No other ODF or federal firefighters or bosses were present until somewhere between 12 PM and 1 PM. The ODF did not fight the fire.

The fire line held that night. Our accomplishment was quite satisfying. By constructing the lines, we gave the no show fire fighting personnel a line to work from. Sadly for us, we have lost nearly 3000 acres of timber and rangeland. The ODF effort on my property was poor at best but under current laws their assessments will be the same or higher. They will not suffer a loss of funding. In addition, the landowners are forced to play their game. The landowners are the losers.

In summary, the Barry Point Fire cost us trees (80 years of growth), at least 3 years of grazing, reforestation costs, firefighting costs, loss of value in our property, miles of fence, and the cost of replacing the fence, grass seeding expenses, and endless hours of extra time that dealing with the fire has taken from us.

The Oregon Department of Forestry continues collecting money from landowners and telling landowners what they must have by a certain date. Is this fair? I, for one, no longer hold any respect for the Oregon Department of Forestry. They, like the US Forest Service, are totally dysfunctional and are playing games with private property and our livelihood.