



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry

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Honorable Paul Holvey, Chair
House Rules Committee
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301



"STEWARDSHIP IN
FORESTRY"

RE: House Bill 2007 – Relating to engine emissions

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) submits the following information for the Committee's consideration of House Bill 2007. The Department has no position on the bill, but is concerned about the potential impact to Oregon's wildfire suppression system.

Oregon's complete and coordinated fire suppression system relies on the functional cooperation of local Rural Fire Protection Districts (RFPDs), Rangeland Protection Associations (RPAs), Forest Protective Associations (FPAs) and forest operators. Often these 320+ RFPDs, 24 RPAs and 12 FPAs have limited funds to procure the types of equipment that are utilized during suppression activities; equipment such as medium and heavy duty trucks that are converted into various capacity engines and water tenders, as well as dozers and other similar equipment. To better assist our suppression cooperators, ODF utilizes two federal programs: Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) and Fire Fighter Property (FFP). Both programs allow ODF to provide cooperators with equipment that has been deemed usable for suppression purposes, at very low to no cost, as long as the equipment is utilized for firefighting activities.

Oregon has been highly successful using these programs to obtain fire suppression resources, totaling more than 350 pieces over the last 7 years. These excess federal pieces of property are often diesels (older than 2010) and very few would be able to meet newer engine emission standards, such as those outlined in HB 2007. Retrofitting options would be cost prohibitive (estimated \$20,000 per apparatus) or unavailable altogether for RFPDs, RPAs and FPAs that operate on small annual budgets.

In addition to impacting Oregon's ability to utilize these programs, HB 2007 may have the following unintended consequences if wildfire suppression equipment is required to meet replacement standards as outlined in the base bill:

- RFPDs who may have received equipment through FFP may have 3-8 additional aging but functional pieces of fire equipment that would be impacted by this bill. This number is estimated at 1,720 pieces of equipment within the fire protection system. If retrofit parts were available for all of these, this would have a financial impact to the fire protection system in Oregon estimated at \$34.4 million. If retrofit parts were unavailable, the equipment would have to be replaced.

- The majority of RFPDs in Oregon have equipment that is kept in service far longer than other fleets because of financial limitations and the fact that emergency fire equipment does not acquire as many road miles in an average year as other vehicles. These fleets are older, but still maintained in good shape, than other fleets industries.
- The 24 Oregon RPAs are supported almost exclusively with FFP Department of Defense (DOD) equipment. This bill would disallow use of all of this equipment.
- Forest operators are responsible to have fire suppression equipment present at operations during fire season. In many instances, they are the closest forces to the incident and are an integral part of the complete and coordinated fire prevention and protection system. Forest landowners are required by law to provide fire protection for their lands. Landowners and operators provide over 460 pieces of equipment with on-road diesel engines to support the Department's fire suppression efforts. This bill, as proposed, would make it more expensive and difficult for them to continue to provide the same level of support.

Oregon's complete and coordinated system continues to be tested with each fire season. One of ODF's core missions is to help sustain, bolster and promote the continued success of suppression activities for all our cooperators, while alleviating some of the budget pressures that suppression activities can create for RFPDs, RPAs and FPAs by providing of valuable equipment at cost-effective pricing.

The Department of Forestry appreciates your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Doug Grafe
Chief-Fire Protection Division
Oregon Department of Forestry