

Dear Senate Majority Leader and Senate Rules Committee Chair, Ginny Burdick, and the other Senate Rules Committee members,

My name is Steven Graeper and I am Chair of the Rhododendron Community Planning Organization (CPO). Rhododendron Oregon is an unincorporated community in rural Clackamas County located on the western foothills of Mt. Hood along US Highway 26.

This year, 2020, marks the Centennial year of our beloved community. I, the entire Rhododendron CPO membership (as voted on at a CPO meeting), and many residents in the extended communities surrounding Rhododendron, heartily recommend that the Rules Committee support HCR 202, commemorating the centennial year for the community of Rhododendron.

Even before the USPS established a post office in Rhododendron on January 26, 1920, Rhododendron served as a visitor rest stop for the early travelers on the Barlow Trail. The area that is now Rhododendron was a wide spot along the Barlow Trail and early pioneers who elected to travel west using the Barlow Trail stopped to rest before completing their journey into the Willamette Valley.

In 1906, Henry Rowe and Lee Holden built the Rhododendron Tavern, later to be known as the Rhododendron Inn, as a destination location for travelers brave enough to make the days long journey into the wilderness and enjoy the beauty that abounds in the Rhododendron area and surrounds. In the 1920's and 30's Rhododendron grew into a unique vacation area filled with summer cabins, allowing Portland and Willamette Valley residents to recreate and relax in the woods. We even have pictures of Governor Vic Atiyeh, as a young boy, enjoying their family cabin in Rhododendron along the banks of the ZigZag River.

As more and more visitors came to the area, business boomed and Rhododendron became a bustling community. As skiing became more and more popular and travel became easier and faster, Rhododendron became a year round recreation area and home to nearly 2000 Full and Part Time residents.

Rhododendron and her residents remain a vital part of rural Oregon and we celebrated the Centennial of the Rhododendron Post Office on January 25, 2020, with an overflow crowd numbering well over 160 people. We received accolades, in letter form, from Senator Jeff Merkley. Oregon House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner attended along with House District 52 Representative Anna Williams, who informed the crowd that Congressman Earl Blumenauer read a brief history of Rhododendron into the Congressional Record to commemorate the occasion.

Additionally, all five Clackamas County Commissioners attended the celebration and read the proclamation they adopted in support of Rhododendron's Centennial to the delight of all in attendance.

I respectfully ask that the Senate Rules Committee follow the lead established by the House Rules Committee and unanimously vote for a "Do Pass" recommendation and send HCR 202 to the Senate Floor, where we hope it will also pass unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve

Steven G. Graeper, Chair
Rhododendron CPO
P.O. Box 33
Rhododendron, OR 97049

rhodycpo@gmail.com

503-939-5220

<https://www.facebook.com/RhodyRising/>

Only through participation can we effect change