



Locally Grown  
and  
GROWING STRONG

## House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management

OFB Testimony on HB 3160

March 18, 2021

Chair Evans, members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 3160. By way of background the Oregon Farm Bureau is the state's largest agricultural trade association, representing nearly 7,000 farm and ranch families from across the state. Whether it is through their careers, volunteer efforts, or responsibilities as rural landowners, Oregon's farmers and ranchers frequently interact with fire on the landscape and recognize the need for thoughtful, effective, and regionally tailored solutions to wildfire mitigation, suppression, and preparedness.

Recent fire seasons have shown an increased threat to communities and infrastructure throughout Oregon. The changing fire landscape has proven that these threats are an "all Oregon" problem and deserve an equitable "all Oregon" funding solution. With this in mind, OFB appreciates the desire of the legislature to increase fire fighting resources, preparing for upcoming fire seasons, and reduce hazardous fuel levels, and to find a funding model that incorporates all of Oregon in this shared responsibility.

However, we have concerns about the bill as drafted. Specifically, it is not clear as to whether the \$10 surcharge is for each policy of insurance and individual may hold, which in some scenarios could be dozens of individual policies, or whether it is intended to be \$10 per every individual or business an insurer covers that has casualty insurance or property insurance. Because of the unique nature of life on the farm, Oregon's farmers and ranchers may have multiple insurance policies per field, have multiple work vehicles, buildings, personal vehicles, home insurance, and more. Moreover, rural landowners are already responsible for paying into our current fire funding model through property assessments. Depending on the intent of HB 3160, the costs of this proposal could substantially stack up for those living in rural Oregon and may again create a disproportionate burden on those living in the WUI. We would also like additional clarification on where the proceeds from the surcharge would be invested and specifically how it would be used to help ensure adequate fire response resources for our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

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