

Dear Ways and Means Committee Members,

I am writing to urge your support of the Oregon State University Extension Service's 2021-23 Base Funding Request of \$61.9M. When Wallowa County was updated its Comprehensive Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in 2017, our Lostine Canyon Community learned that we lived in a newly-designated "Community at Risk" from wildfire. And furthermore, our community was evaluated to be at an "Extreme Risk" of large-scale wildland fire.

Since then, OSU Extension has been an invaluable partner in helping us learn about what it means to transform ourselves into a "fire-adapted community". With the expert assistance of OSU Extension and other Wallowa County-based partners, especially Wallowa Resources, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and the U.S. Forest Service, Lostine Canyon became Northeast Oregon's first nationally recognized "Firewise Community" in 2019.

OSU Extension organized and led a field workshop on "Conifer Diseases and Pests" to help us better evaluate the health of our privately owned woodland lots so that we could develop our individual plans for thinning and fuels reduction to lessen our risks from wildfire. On a very short deadline, OSU Extension provided necessary expertise in helping us develop a "Forest Management Plan" for a large common lot that posed a particularly high wildfire risk to the community, so that we could apply for a thinning and fuels reduction grant being offered by USDA's NRCS.

Once COVID-19 arrived, OSU Extension quickly developed their online offerings to fill the ongoing needs for learning about forest management to reduce wildfire risks. A great resource for us was the six-webinar series on "Forests of the Northern Blues", which included a very pertinent session on "Fire-Adapted Communities".

In summary, I would emphasize that OSU Extension has been an invaluable partner in bringing its field-based and online educational expertise, along with its efficient publication development capabilities, to help Wallowa County effectively address its significant wildfire risks and guide our residents in becoming a "fire-adaptive community". Much progress is underway. Two additional "Communities at Risk" in Wallowa County are currently in the process of becoming nationally recognized as "Firewise Communities" and three other "Communities at Risk" have expressed their interest in wanting to learn more about also becoming a "Firewise Community".

The services provided by OSU Extension are truly valuable to the public, especially in rural areas. I am happy to have my tax dollars directed to fund their operations. Please give your thoughtful consideration to supporting their 2021-23 Base Funding Request of \$61.9M. Thank you.