

Submitter: phil strader

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Tax Expenditures

Measure: HB3523

I would like to convey the importance of this bill to families and businesses effected by wildfires. I am a third generation rancher and timber owner in Glide Oregon. For 100 years and three generations, we have managed our resources for generations to come. My son is just finishing his degree in Forestry from Oregon State University, and his plans are to return home and become the fourth generation to manage and operate our business. In September of 2000, the Archie Creek fire started due to conditions involving the power lines spanning up the North Umpqua River. In a matter of hours, our lives and livelihoods changed forever. 100 years of management came to an end, and we were faced with new challenges if we were to persevere and be able to continue doing business in the future. In the months following the fire, a suit was filed in the interest of those effected by the wildfire. A settlement compensating the devastating loss of timber and resources would be a means to continue our business, and allow for my son to have the opportunity to continue his dream of taking over the management and eventually the ownership of the ranch and timber ventures. Unfortunately, the tax reproductions of a settlement would be nearly as devastating as the fire, and would severely hinder the ability to put the necessary revenue and resources back into the property and timber to restore it to a productive level. With a complete loss of all of our plantations and young timber, we have begun replanting hundreds of acres, with hundreds of thousands of seedlings. This is a huge financial undertaking that was completely unexpected and unplanned for. In addition, we have lost most of our merchantable timber and the future income that it would generate. A huge tax imposed on any settlement would severely hinder our ability to fund the restoration process we have begun. A better alternative would be for us to be able to use the settlement money to complete restoration so we can continue to operate successfully into the future generations, and as a productive profitable business, pay the taxes on the money generated from the business as it thrives in the coming years.

Families and businesses across the state that have been effected by fires have suffered tragic losses, they should be allowed to utilize any and all of a settlement received in order to try and put the pieces back together. In many cases the settlement itself may not be enough to do this. When you make your decision, please consider the relief for those involved by relieving the additional tax burden.

Sincerely,

Phil Strader  
French Creek Ranch