

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and Members of the Committee,

I have served as a volunteer Board Member for Northwest Youth Corps (NYC) for the past ten years. I also worked as a crew leader for NYC in 1986 and personally witnessed the profound impact a job training program like NYC can have on young people. It was the most powerful leadership training I've ever experienced and have also seen firsthand the confidence and skills it has provided for so many Oregon teenagers over the years. I strongly urge the Ways and Means Committee **to support** the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Office of Workforce Investments Policy Option Package 301 request, which includes \$10 million for the Oregon Conservation Corps and \$2 million dedicated to Tribal Youth Corps funding.

Our youth today need more meaningful summer job experiences and opportunities. NYC's Community Wildfire Protection Corps (CWPC) offers this. Oregon also needs to reduce wildfire risk in our most vulnerable communities. In the past 12 months, NYC's Wildfire Protection Corps has trained 279 young adults, provided 36,000 hours of on the ground work, while protecting hundreds of structures and thousands of acres. By supporting the Workforce Investments Policy Option Package 301, we can train young adults who can also fill the needed gaps in our wildfire workforce of tomorrow. Please support this measure. Northwest Youth Corps depends on this funding stream to operate our Community Wildfire Protection Corps (CWPC). Without these funds, our CWPC program cannot exist.

As I continue to work to serve youth, my husband serves as a volunteer fire-fighter near Portland. I have become very aware of how dry and more dangerous our communities are to fires. However, there are not enough trained volunteers or fire-fighters to respond to these calls. Our youth could be tomorrow's fire fighters and can also play an important role today in protecting residential homes and areas, through the Community Wildfire Protection Corps. This is another win-win for our workforce, our lands and for youth.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony. I appreciate your dedication and commitment to helping today's youth and tomorrow's workforce. There couldn't be a more important time to focus on a measure like this. I hope you will strongly consider supporting package 301.

Sincerely,

Rose Yuska-Wolfe

Board Member, Northwest Youth Corps