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Cherie Kausler

Friends of the Historic Union Community Hall Board Member

Operating the Catherine Creek Community Center and Union Food Bank

667 N Main Street Union, Oregon 97883

[www.CatherineCreekCommunityCenter.com](http://www.CatherineCreekCommunityCenter.com)

Dear Chair Lively, Vice–Chair Gamba, Vice–Chair Bobby Levy, and Members of the House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment:

My name is Cherie Kausler, and I live in Union, Oregon, a small rural community in the northeastern part of the state. Surrounded by mountains and forests, we are increasingly impacted each year by large wildfires and the dangerous levels of smoke that engulfs the Grande Ronde Valley where I reside.

I am also a representative of the Friends of the Historic Union Community Hall, the nonprofit organization that operates the Catherine Creek Community Center and the Union Food Bank. Our mission is to bring community members together by providing services and resources that address food security, education, community health, and the arts. I strongly support HB 3170, which would provide an additional \$10 million in funding for Resilience Hubs and Networks. As extreme weather and wildfires increasingly impact Oregonians, it's essential to ensure that every community has the tools to prepare, recover, and thrive.

In 2024, Oregon saw an increase in the use of food pantries across the state, highlighting the growing need for food security programs. At the Catherine Creek Community Center, we operate several food scarcity programs, including a Backpack Program that delivers food to youth, the Union Food Bank, and Community Meals for seniors and individuals with limited mobility. These programs are essential in ensuring that no one in our rural community goes hungry, particularly during times of crisis and emergencies.

To prepare for the increasing food needs in our community, our organization has received partial funding to expand our food pantry. While this funding has been a critical first step, it will only cover a portion of the costs needed to complete the project. Without additional resources, our ability to meet the rising demand for food assistance and fill the gap in emergency situations will be compromised, leaving many families vulnerable during times of crisis.

I support HB 3170 because I've seen firsthand how resilience funding can strengthen communities. Having a fully funded and well-equipped Resilience Hub in our community ensures that families in Union and surrounding areas have access to the food and resources they need, even in the face of natural disasters.

So far, Resilience Hubs and Networks have invested \$10 million in locally driven efforts like ours to prepare communities for disaster. During the last grant cycle, the state received over 700 applications but was only able to fund 96 of them, demonstrating the urgent need for additional

funding. These grants are essential for communities like ours to repair and maintain emergency shelters, secure critical equipment such as generators and refrigeration systems, and staff positions that coordinate community aid.

The programs supported by Resilience Hubs and Networks save lives, empower first responders, and ensure recovery efforts happen more quickly. As a community leader, I can attest that these investments benefit the most vulnerable populations—those hit hardest by extreme weather and wildfires.

I urge you to support HB 3170 so we can continue building strong, resilient Oregon communities.

Sincerely,  
Cherie Kausler  
Board Member  
Friends of the Historic Union Community Hall  
Operating the Catherine Creek Community Center  
667 N Main Street Union, Oregon 97883