



**Statement of Support: HB 3219**  
**House Committee on Higher Education Committee and Workforce Development**  
**Submitted by: Genoa Ingram**  
**February 20, 2025**

The Oregon Fire District Directors Association (OFDDA), formed in 1950, serves the elected public officials of over 200 Fire Protection Districts throughout Oregon, all Special Districts formed under ORS Chapter 478. The five-member governing boards, who serve without compensation, are responsible for the financial and management oversight of the Districts.

Funding for the University of Oregon Hazards Lab (OHAZ) is critical to disaster preparedness and response. We have all seen the ravage visited upon Oregon and neighboring states due to massive and unprecedented wildfires. While Oregon grapples for funding for wildfire relief, there is one thing that everyone can agree on: it is far less expensive to prevent a fire than to put one out after the fact. HB 3219 will go far to accomplish prevention.

In addition to its very effective seismic monitoring, OHAZ operates dozens of high-speed wildfire cameras that help firefighters spot and track fires. Any member of the public can visit [ALERTWest.live](https://ALERTWest.live) to watch the landscape and fire behavior through real-time and timelapse images. Firefighters, dispatchers, and other emergency response personnel can directly control the cameras and receive AI-enabled alerts when new ignitions are detected in their region.

OHAZ's wildfire detection and situational awareness systems are increasingly vital in an era of escalating fire risk, enhancing rapid response and reducing destruction. These programs are not theoretical—they are active, operational systems that directly protect lives and property.

Investing in OHAZ is a smart financial decision. Hazard monitoring and early warning systems save Oregon millions of dollars by reducing disaster response costs, infrastructure damage, and economic disruption. Without sustained state funding to maintain and expand its infrastructure, the long-term viability of these programs is at risk, leaving our communities more vulnerable at a time when proactive resilience planning is more critical than ever.

We urge your passage of HB 3219 and thank you for your careful consideration.