

Submitter: Bryan Cutchen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3104

March 09, 2025

Members of the Oregon Legislature
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3104, the Rural Community Resource Center. As the mayor of Oakridge, a rural community facing many of the challenges described in the bill, I can attest to the urgent need for the resources and support this legislation promises. The Rural Community Resource Center would be a transformative asset to our city and many other rural communities across Oregon.

Oakridge, like many small towns in Oregon, has struggled with limited capacity to plan, manage, and implement critical infrastructure projects. Our city faces persistent challenges in securing and administering state and federal funding, accessing expert technical assistance, and developing the necessary partnerships for projects that are essential to our long-term sustainability. From water and wastewater system improvements to economic development and housing projects, our community lacks the staff and resources to fully capitalize on available opportunities.

HB 3104 offers a solution by creating a Rural Community Resource Center that will provide technical expertise and staffing in key areas such as public works, engineering, land use planning, community development, housing, and economic development. This support would enable Oakridge, along with other rural communities, to successfully develop and implement the projects that are vital to our growth and prosperity. Additionally, the proposed Leverage Fund would allow us to work collaboratively with neighboring jurisdictions and the private sector, ensuring equitable resource distribution across our region.

This legislation is particularly important because, as we've seen in Oakridge, rural communities often lack the staff capacity to pursue the necessary projects that drive economic and community development. The staff support provided by the Rural Community Resource Center would help fill this gap, giving us the tools we need to improve our infrastructure, enhance public services, and create more opportunities

for our residents.

In a time when rural communities like Oakridge are struggling to maintain and grow their economies, the Rural Community Resource Center would be a vital resource in helping us navigate these challenges and seize the opportunities that exist. We strongly believe that HB 3104 is an investment in the future of rural Oregon, and we urge you to support its passage.

Thank you for your time and for considering the needs of Oregon's rural communities. We look forward to seeing this important legislation move forward.

Sincerely,

Bryan P. Cutchen, Rear Admiral, USN (ret)
Mayor of Oakridge