

FRENCHGLEN RANGELAND FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

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March 11, 2025

Hon. Thuy Tran, Chair  
House Committee on Emergency Management,  
General Government, and Veterans  
Oregon Legislative Assembly

Re: HB 3349, HB 3350

Dear Chairwoman Tran, Members of the Committee,

I write in support of House Bills 3349 and 3350 on behalf of the Frenchglen Rangeland Fire Protection Association, a non-profit organization comprised of cattle ranchers, farmers, and landowners in Harney County.

I am a founding Board member of the Association. In addition, I am an active member of the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative, and a core group member of Harney County's Community Wildfire Prevention Planning Committee. In 2015, I was one of the drafters of the Memorandum of Understanding between the State's RFPAs and the federal government, the result of which was the removal of tensions between and the beginning of a spirit of cooperation and collaboration with the RFPAs and federal firefighters.

As you know, this summer brought the State of Oregon one of the most devastating fire seasons in its history. Governor Tina Kotek, after she was informed of the invaluable role the state's Rangeland Fire Protection Associations played in fighting these fires, directed that RFPAs be helped in any way possible to achieve their missions in Initial Attack and otherwise in the fight to protect Oregon's rangelands and other natural resources.

RFPAs are powerful volunteer organizations with extremely small budgets. We always need help with obtaining firefighting vehicles, equipment, fuel, equipment repair, and supplies.

My friend and colleague rancher John O'Keeffe of Adel, President of the Warner Valley RFPA, has written you in support of House Bills 3349 and 3350, and I would be hard pressed to match the quality and thoroughness of his letter. Suffice it to say that it

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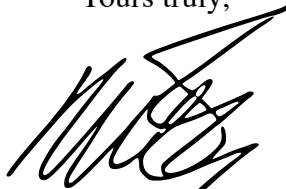
perfectly captures and says what I would have written to you on behalf of Frenchglen RFPA, with an eloquence I could not emulate.

A number of years ago, the Frenchglen RFPA joined hands with Warner Valley to help fight the devastating and fast moving Poker Jim fire on the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge, even though it was not on Frenchglen's area of responsibility. And just this past September, I assisted federal firefighters on Harney County's Solomon Fire by providing water through Frenchglen RFPA's water tender when no other water was available. I'm a 78 year old guy, and I was happy to do it. That's just how we do things in Southeast Oregon's ranching country.

In short, RFPAs are the State of Oregon's best bargain when it comes to rangeland firefighting. We save the taxpayers of Oregon millions of dollars through our efforts. We could appreciate a little help with our budgets and equipment, and HBs 3349 and 3350 do just that.

Frenchglen RFPA urges the Committee to support these House Bills and to recommend them to the full Legislative Assembly for passage.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Fox', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Mike Fox, Secretary  
Frenchglen Rangeland Fire Protection Association