

**Testimony by Sustainable Northwest before the Oregon House Committee  
on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans**

**In support of HB 3349 and HB 3350**

**March 25, 2025**

Chair Tran, Co-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and members of the committee

For the record, my name is Daniel Whelan, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for Sustainable Northwest.

Sustainable Northwest strongly supports House Bill 3349 and House Bill 3350 that will create the Rangeland Protection Association Fund. These bills will allow Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs) to purchase firefighting equipment from the Oregon Department of Forestry and allocate \$1 million from the state's General Fund to RFPAs for equipment, training, and other firefighting needs.

Sustainable Northwest works with over 120 ranchers on 7 million acres in 11 western states, including Country Natural Beef's 100 producers and many other family and Tribal ranchers.

The 2024 fires burned 1.7 million acres of rangelands in Oregon. Those fires hurt landowners and ranchers that we work with and many others, burning cattle, fences, structures, grazing lands and sensitive sagebrush and bunchgrass ecosystems that will take years to recover.

RFPAs are our first line of defense against initial starts that can become catastrophic wildfires and are a critical component of Oregon's coordinated wildfire response system. RFPAs are all-volunteer teams that work with little but accomplish a lot – fighting rangeland fires for their neighbors, their communities, and the public and private lands on which all Oregonians depend.

HB 3349 and HB 3350 are common-sense, cost-effective pieces of legislation to provide RFPAs resources to protect their communities and the

landscapes we all use for food production, energy production, eco-system services, and recreation in the face of increasing wildfires.

We urge you to support House Bill 3349 and House Bill 3350 -1 amendments. Thank you



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