

51187 Blue River Drive
Finn Rock, OR 97488
mckenziessd.org



District Office: 541.822.3338
Elem (K-6) Building: 541.822.3315
MS/HS Building: 541.822.3313

3/25/2025

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and the Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing in support of the -2 amendments to House Bill 3149 to provide a one-year extension to wildfire impacted school districts. This funding is critical to prevent budget cuts in my school district next year and will give us time to prepare for a funding transition.

We continue to be thankful for the legislature's forward thinking support of our district following the Holiday Farm Fire of 2020 as well its recent work to close the funding gap for the 2024-25 school year. These funds have allowed our students, families and staff to focus on recovery while maintaining the normalcy of our school support system.

Utilizing the funds from HB 4026, McKenzie has maintained investments made under both the High School Success and Student Success Acts. This includes our CTE courses, a family/community liaison and mental health services. More importantly it allowed our community to recover from a disaster without putting them through the additional trauma of losing trusted teachers and staff. Continuing those investments also allowed our students and district to actively support our community's recovery. Our Construction Program students built sheds and helped complete projects help fire survivors rebuild; our family/community liaison helped families secure assistance and resources as well as built relationships with recovery agencies; and our contracted mental health therapist continued to help students in need of additional support. This has been vital especially during fire season as our district has had wildfire within our borders three of the last four seasons since the Holiday Farm Fire.

To be honest, it feels a bit defeating to be requesting additional funding five years after the fire. We have been working diligently in our community to find ways to move forward. This has taken many of different forms from volunteering to do site clean-up, participating in county and state meetings and committees as well as establishing non-profit organizations to meet our community's recovery needs. Despite this grassroots work, federal and state recovery resources are just now hitting the ground. Lazy Days RV and Mobile Home Park had its grand opening in

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February, with families now preparing to move in. Oregon Housing and Community Services' Homeowner Assistance and Reconstruction Program funding is starting to get into our communities allowing residents to rebuild who previously could not afford to. These developments bring hope that families and patrons will be able to return to stable housing within our community. Additional funding will allow for more time for these programs to finally get traction in our community before the district's need to make drastic reductions in programming.

The finality of the proposed one-year extension under HB 3149 provides us the needed deadline and time to prepare to for the elimination of these funds. With our funding cycles in mind, we can spread the reductions between the 2025-26 and 2026-27 budgets avoiding a steep reduction in one swoop. Without the additional year, we would be forced cut nearly \$400,000 or nearly eight percent of our general fund budget, the equivalent of nineteen school days or five teaching positions, between now and adopting our budget in May.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for the -2 amendment to HB 3149 to provide a one-year funding lifeline to our school, students and community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathaniel Lane Tompkins', written in a cursive style.

Nathaniel Lane Tompkins
Superintendent/Principal
McKenzie School District