

Testimony in Support of House Bill 3350

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Chair Tran, Vice Chair Grayber, Lewis and Members of the Community :

My name is Ryan Nopp, and I am a Rancher and community Member residing in Shaniko, Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3349, which aims to enhance the capabilities of Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs) through the transfer of firefighting equipment and the establishment of the Rangeland Protection Association Fund.

Personal Experience with RFPAs:

Over the past decade, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of RFPAs in our community. Previously, wildfires in our area would often exceed 100 acres, causing significant damage to both private and public lands. However, with the equipment and support provided by state and federal agencies, our local RFPAs have been able to contain fires much more rapidly, often preventing them from reaching such devastating sizes.

The availability of equipment strategically positioned throughout the RFPAs area has been instrumental in these efforts. The collaboration between local volunteers and agency personnel has fostered a formidable alliance against wildfires, leading to more efficient and effective fire suppression.

Financial Commitment and Advocacy:

Our ranch has invested thousands of dollars over the years in fuel, equipment maintenance, and the operation of dozers, graders, and other firefighting apparatus. This financial commitment underscores the dedication of local landowners to safeguarding our community from the devastating effects of wildfires. Any additional support provided through HB 3349 would significantly bolster the resources available to RFPAs, enhancing their ability to protect both private and public lands.

Support for House Bill 3350:

House Bill 3350 proposes several critical measures to support RFPAs, including:

- **Equipment Transfer:** Authorizing the State Forestry Department to transfer ownership of depreciated firefighting vehicles and related equipment to RFPAs through sale or donation.

- **Funding and Assistance:** Providing funding to RFPAs for firefighting and rangeland fire readiness and assisting these associations in pursuing federal grants for volunteer support and rural fire preparedness.
- **Rangeland Protection Association Fund:** Establishing a dedicated fund consisting of appropriated moneys, grants, and other allocations to ensure sustained financial resources for RFPAs.

These provisions will empower RFPAs with the necessary tools and financial support to continue their vital work in wildfire prevention and suppression.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I am a staunch advocate for the RFPAs and firmly believe in their potential when adequately resourced. The passage of House Bill 3350 will provide essential support to these associations, enabling them to respond more effectively to wildfires and minimize fire damage in our communities.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 3350 and consider the profound impact it will have on enhancing wildfire resilience in Oregon's rangeland areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Ryan Nopp

Board Member

Bakeover Shaniko RFPA