

Submitter: Susan Heath

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3489

To the members of the House Committee on Revenue,

Thank you for this opportunity to share some thoughts about fires in Oregon. I live in the Willamette Valley and I'm very concerned about the effects of forest fires on Oregon's communities.

The rate at which Oregon is experiencing larger, more frequent, and more damaging forest fires is accelerating and alarming.

In 2024, the Oregon Legislature held a special session to pay for record-breaking summer wildfires. In light of uncertain federal funding and protections, the outlook for funding wildfire prevention and suppression in Oregon this year is even more dire.

In the 1990s, the timber severance tax was discontinued and the revenue collected from harvest taxes has been greatly diminished for the last two decades. Many of the largest timber companies in Oregon are paying less in taxes now, leaving Oregon taxpayers and smaller companies to pick up the bill for fire protection.

HB 3489 with the new amendment will mirror SB 1593 (2024) with the -3 amendment, with a few changes. Big timber companies will pay their fair share for forest protection. Currently, the largest timber companies in Oregon are paying a fraction of the cost to protect their private land from wildfires, despite making hundreds of millions in profit. Oregonians and small woodland owners are picking up the majority of the tab. HB 3489 will

? Ensure future funding for wildfire suppression. In 2024 alone, fighting wildfires in Oregon cost approximately \$350 million.

? Fund state programs that help prevent wildfires. One third of the revenue from the policy will go towards the Oregon State Fire Marshal for community wildfire prevention and resilience.

? Support increased revenue for Oregon's timber counties. One third of the revenue

will be reserved for unrestricted use for counties where timber is harvested.

Please help our communities by supporting HB 3489.

Thank you,
Susan Heath,
Albany, OR