



Hood River County Board of Commissioners

Allison Williams, County Administrator

COMMISSIONERS

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April 29, 2025

House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support House Bill 3940 – Wildfire Omnibus Bill

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Hood River County to express support for House Bill 3940 which aims to ensure all land in Oregon is adequately and fairly funded for wildfire protection.

The majority of wildfires are not caused by landowners who contribute to the fire protection assessment. Many fires are either lightning-caused or originate from people or businesses who do not pay into the system. This highlights a significant flaw in the current system, one that necessitates reform to ensure that fire protection funding is shared equitably among all Oregonians.

Landowners across the state are increasingly burdened with disproportionately high costs for wildfire protection. The largest impact is being felt by landowners of grazing and timber lands—both public and private—due to the high volume of acres that are assessed. Hood River County, located within Oregon's largest Fire Protection District, is facing a staggering 53% increase in fire protection costs from FY 23 to FY 26. For the County, which owns over 34,500 acres of forestland, these escalating costs are a significant strain on our annual budget. For FY 26 the cost of fire protection from Salem Fire Management, which is passed on to district landowners across the state, has increased by 42%. Such steep and sudden increases put a heavy financial burden on counties and property owners, especially given the limitations on how quickly revenue can be generated to offset these rising costs.

Experts predict that the frequency and severity of wildfires will increase, underscoring the need for proactive fiscal planning and equitable support. This support should be shared by all Oregonians, as effective fire suppression benefits everyone. We urge the legislature to support HB 3940 to ensure a fair and sustainable wildfire funding solution for all citizens.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Jennifer Euwer

Chair, Hood River County Board of Commissioners