

Row River Rural Fire Protection District

P.O. Box 44
Dorena, Oregon 97434
541-946-0110

May 12, 2025

Honorable Chair Nathanson
Honorable Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters
Honorable Members of the Committee on Revenue

Re: HB-3518

Honorable Representatives,

Thank you for your commitment to the welfare of our great State of Oregon, and the opportunity to comment on HB-3518.

I support HB-3518 to stabilize, diversify, and index the County Assessment Function Funding Assistance Account mechanism.

I am the Fire Chief of the Row River Rural Fire Protection District, the first new Special Rural Fire Protection District formed in the last 20+ years.

In forming the district and now estimating revenue for the protection of our District constituents and beyond to partnering agencies, I have depended on the Lane County Assessment and Taxation for revenue predictions and accurate valuations of our District properties, as well as clarity on the different taxes applied to properties for transparency to our constituents. In addition, the assurance that predicted revenue will be collected to the highest rate, distributed to the District accurately and in a timely fashion is critical for the smaller Districts like ours, who operate on a shoestring budget and a narrow margin of financial reserves.

The property tax revenue is a Special District's single greatest asset and source of revenue. Efficient collection, and distribution of tax resources to the greatest potential ultimately benefits all County communities and constituents and is an honorable and fiduciary responsibility of our government agencies to provide.

Improved staffing, resources, property databases information, inspections, and revenue analysis for our Assessment and Taxation offices will enable better services to District agencies like our small Rural Fire Protection District, ultimately resulting in better services by our emergency responders to our community and beyond to other partnering agencies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Walt Bernard

Fire Chief
Row River Rural Fire Protection District
PO Box 44
Dorena Or. 97434
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Established July 1, 2024