

Submitter: Estelle Voeller
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR201
Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the Committee:

I urge SUPPORT for SJR 201.

I am Estelle Voeller, living in Jackson County outside the City of Medford. I'm a grandparent and foster grandparent, living on a modest income.

In my over 50 years in Oregon, it's always surprised me that surplus tax money taken in when the economy did unexpectedly well, was not saved for times when things went badly. The state economist cannot always predict what will happen over the next two years – such as abrupt changes in tariffs, recessions or depressions, supply chain issues, a pandemic. Who could have predicted a President who would refuse to distribute money and grants legislated by Congress? It is nice to get a couple hundred dollars back once in awhile, but gee, the majority of the money goes to the wealthy, who don't need it. I would much rather the surplus be used for education and fire prevention/suppression. In fact, I would prefer all the surplus went towards these two worthy causes. Remember "a stitch in time saves nine."

This resolution would help shore up K-12 and community colleges, especially in times when monies are scarcer. The pandemic has been over for 3+ years, but the effects from it continue on in the lives of students. Extra support is still needed to help them recover and thrive. Likewise, there are ongoing issues for many students displaced or traumatized by wildfires in our rural areas. They will become the future workers whose contributions will pay for our social security. Don't we want them to have the skills, hope and stamina to thrive?

I strongly support surplus tax monies also being dedicated to fire prevention and suppression. The fires are only going to get worse. Having experienced the Almeda Fire in southern Oregon in 2020, I'm well aware of the devastation, loss and lengthy recovery involved. Friends, schools, businesses are still dealing with the losses 5+ years later. Having more financial resources to devote to prevention can help more communities avoid the pain. And when the fires rage beyond the budgeted payments, there could be resources available to help pay the contractors and agencies which provided emergency services in a timely way.

I strongly urge you to pass this resolution out of committee.

Estelle Voeller

Medford, Oregon