

**REVENUE:** No revenue impact

**FISCAL:** Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

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**Action:** Do Pass  
**Vote:** 4 - 0 - 1  
**Yeas:** Atkinson, Beyer, Prozanski, Avakian  
**Nays:** 0  
**Exc.:** Bates  
**Prepared By:** Sue Marshall, Administrator  
**Meeting Dates:** 2/15, 2/27

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Allows certain landowners to create rangeland fire protection associations. Allows the State Forester to enter into cooperative agreements or contract with rangeland protection associations to protect rangeland from fire. Authorizes the State Forester to assist rangeland protection associations with training, acquisition of firefighting equipment and provision of liability insurance. Directs State Forester or rangeland protection association to provide protection after the State Board of Forestry determines that rangeland is included in the rangeland protection system in liability exemption. Appropriates moneys from the General Fund to the State Forestry Department for the purpose of providing assistance to rangeland protection associations. Declares an emergency and takes effect July 1, 2007.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Ability of volunteer associations to contain fires
- Need for training and liability insurance
- Expansion of program to unprotected areas

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:** Ironside Rangeland Fire Protection Association, formed in 1964, is a volunteer program that provides rangeland fire protection services on private rangeland property in Malheur County. From 1998 to 2006, seven additional volunteer rangeland fire protection associations were formed in eastern Oregon. Currently, there is no fire protection program for private rangeland property except for these volunteer groups. Without preventive measures, fires that start on private rangeland can escalate and spread to publicly owned properties.

Senate Bill 450 allows owners of rangeland to form organizations for the purpose of protecting rangeland from fire when their property is outside of any forest protection district. The measure includes a request for \$60,000 from the General Fund to support the eight existing rangeland fire protection associations and an additional two associations that are in formative stages.