

HB 3109 Testimony House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee on April 9, 2013

Dear Chair Witt and honorable committee members,

Thank you for hearing HB 3109 and I hope after you hear the testimony you'll work the bill.

The DEQ Director reported:

On September 9, 2012; the Pole Creek forest wildfire broke out in the Deschutes National Forest. The Pole Creek Fire began sending smoke into "Central Oregon" communities on September 11, 2012. The town of Sisters was severely impacted by smoke quickly reaching "very unhealthy" and "hazardous" air quality levels. Smoke intrusions into Central Oregon continued through October 12, 2012.

I have provided you a chart of the air quality report from DEQ monitoring equipment in Sisters. The chart demonstrates that the air quality in Sisters reached "very unhealthy" and "hazardous" levels for 5 days.

Based upon the press reports about the air quality in Central Oregon during this period; I requested data from Deschutes Public Health, Oregon Public Health, and DEQ on the public health situation in Central Oregon from the Pole Creek fire.

Next, I requested from the Oregon Department of Forestry and ODFW information on impacts of forest wildfires on wildlife and aquatic habitat.

Chair Witt joined me as a chief sponsor on this bill and we submitted the draft bill.

Since we drafted the bill; we had inputs from the Oregon Department of Public Health and Oregon Department of Forestry.

Their inputs are reflected in the -2 amendment and they support the intent of the bill to increase public awareness of the impact of forest wildfires.

The drafter missed the statement that we submitted for the amendment to add the statement "The purpose of the report is to increase the public awareness of the impact of forest wildfires."

We'll add this statement on line 7 after the word "2014."

Please work this bill to help address what I believe is a significant public health, wildlife, and aquatic habitat danger.

Respectfully submitted,
Gene Whisnant

HB 3109-2
(LC 3219)
4/8/13 (CDT/ps)

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
HOUSE BILL 3109**

1 Delete lines 4 through 14 of the printed bill and insert:

2 **“SECTION 1. The Director of the Oregon Health Authority and the**
3 **State Forester shall jointly prepare a report regarding the impacts of**
4 **the 2012 Pole Creek forest wildfire on public health, fish and wildlife**
5 **and aquatic habitat, and submit the report, in the manner provided in**
6 **ORS 192.245, to the Legislative Assembly no later than February 10,**
7 **2014. The report may include recommendations for legislation to pre-**
8 **vent or reduce the impacts of forest fires on public health, fish and**
9 **wildlife or aquatic habitat or to improve state or local government**
10 **responsiveness to forest fire impacts that threaten public health, fish**
11 **and wildlife or aquatic habitat.**

12 **“SECTION 2. This 2013 Act being necessary for the immediate**
13 **preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is**
14 **declared to exist, and this 2013 Act takes effect on its passage.”.**

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