



OREGON FIRE DISTRICT
DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

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April 7, 2015

Rep. Brian Clem, Chair
House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water
Room 347, State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Letter of Support for HB 3213

Dear Rep. Clem and Committee Members:

The Oregon Fire District Directors Association (OFDDA) was formed in 1950 and serves the elected public officials of over 200 Fire Protection Districts throughout Oregon, all Special Districts formed under ORS Chapter 478. The five-member governing boards are responsible for the financial and management oversight of the Districts. They serve without compensation.

A representative of OFDDA serviced on the committee formed by the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association to study and make recommendations for a solution to the protection of rural unincorporated lands. The OFDDA supports HB 3213 as a means of achieving parity with regard to protection of unincorporated lands by allowing Fire Districts to assess property taxes, as does Oregon Department of Forestry, to help cover fire protection costs.

The lower water levels and reduced snow pack we have witnessed during the first part of the year are ominous indicators that this fire season will be one of the worst in Oregon history. For the protection of your constituents served by Rural Fire Protection Districts, it is imperative that Districts have the necessary tools to adequately serve the most rural and vulnerable of Oregon's communities. Allowing them to assess taxes to cover these high risk areas represents a responsible and strategic approach to public safety.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3213 and we urge your support.

Respectfully,

Mark Kreutzer, President