



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Forestry

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"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

February 18, 2016

The Honorable Chris Edwards, Chair  
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
900 Court Street NE, Room 347  
Salem, OR 97310

**RE: HB 4007 – Allows County Development of Rangeland Protection Associations**

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Forestry appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 4007.

HB 4007 provides an additional method of organizing for fire protection on non-federal rangeland to that which already exists in ORS 477.315 to 477.325. This method would allow for the formation of a Rangeland Protection Association through action of a county governing body, as opposed to the current method of landowners coordinating through the Board of Forestry to establish an RPA.

This bill retains the existing mechanisms for cooperation among the RPA, the Board of Forestry and ODF, regardless of the method of organizing the RPA. As such, all RPAs are expected to submit annual budgets to the Board of Forestry for approval and will be expected to enter into a cooperative agreement with ODF regarding the association's protection of rangeland and ODF's provision of support to the RPA. Cooperative agreements detail ODF's ability to assist the RPA with training association members, acquiring firefighting equipment through federal surplus programs and – with limited financial assistance – paying for liability insurance or other administrative expenses of the RPA.

RPAs are highly valued partners in Oregon's complete and coordinated fire protection system. There are currently 20, all volunteer, RPAs operating in eastern Oregon, providing protection for 4.6 million acres of private and publicly owned rangeland.

The Department of Forestry again thanks the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 4007. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Doug Grafe  
Division Chief  
Fire Protection Division

c: Doug Decker, State Forester  
Richard Whitman, Governor's Natural Resources Assistant  
Brett Brownscombe, Governor's Natural Resource Policy Advisor  
ODF Executive Team