

Dr. Brandy L. Ethridge-Lipke, PhD, MPAdm  
Chief of Staff  
Rep. Jeff Helfrich, House District 52  
900 Court St. NE, Rm #H-489  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 4152

Dear Ms. Ethridge-Lipke:

Please accept this letter as my testimony in support of House Bill 4152, for review February 9, 2018 by the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. I appreciate your help submitting this testimony on my behalf.

*Dear Chair Evans and members of the committee:*

*My name is Genevieve Scholl and I am a resident of Hood River County, and the Communications and Special Projects Manager for the Port of Hood River. I am also the volunteer coordinator of the OneGorge Advocacy Group, an informally organized group of professionals from the public, private, and non-profit sectors in the Gorge that work together to advocate for regional priorities. I am grateful for the opportunity to express to you my personal and professional support for House Bill 4152, authorizing grant monies to the sheriff's offices of Multnomah and Hood River Counties for expenses related to wildfire recovery and preparedness.*

*Last summer, I had the distinct honor of working at the Emergency Operations Center and the Joint Information Center in Hood River County during the Eagle Creek Fire. While the effects of the fire were of course devastating to everyone in Gorge, and we are all still struggling with the grief of loss of so much of our beautiful forests, wildlife, our neighbors' homes and security in the western Gorge, my experience at the EOC was uplifting and encouraging, to say the least.*

*Hood River County is small, on paper – both geographically and in terms of population. But within its small borders lie half of Mount Hood, a large segment of the Pacific Crest Trail, one of the world's greatest destinations for non-motorized water recreation, and of course about a third of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. On paper, the Sheriff's office serves a county of only 23,000 people. But in reality, of course, the number of people who depend on the Sheriff's department search and rescue and emergency response capabilities numbers in the millions each year, as people from around the world are drawn to, and drawn into, the dramatic – and often dangerous, and vulnerable – wildland landscapes of the region.*

*I am very proud to say that all of those lives are in good hands. We've got folks climbing across glaciers, scaling cliffs, wandering through vast forests, swimming and surfing in a federal waterway and major shipping channel, and flying through the air, strapped to huge kites in 30 mph gusts. These aren't your run of the mill tourists. Our guests are constantly trying to kill themselves - I say that jokingly but it's our*

*county's first responders that are constantly called upon to go out there to find them, scoop them up, and get them safely home.*

*During the Eagle Creek Fire in 2017, during the Mosier Oil Train Derailment and fire in 2016, during the ice storms of 2015-16, and during catastrophic flooding in 1996, 2006, I have personally seen our small Sheriff's department respond with remarkable efficiency, responsibility, and ingenuity. Especially during the Eagle Creek Fire, I saw first-hand a weeks-long multi-agency effort based on cooperation that was open to anything and more importantly – ready for anything -- to save lives and prevent loss of property, this Sheriff's department demonstrated real world-class capability.*

*They are constantly asked to do more than they should. They deserve and need some extra help and they deserve access to the newest and best tools available to respond to the need.*

*House Bill 4152 provides modest funding for equipment and training that WILL result – eventually – in preventing millions of dollars in losses during the next catastrophe. And the one after that. And the one after that.*

*Thank you,*

*Genevieve Scholl  
Port of Hood River  
1000 E. Port Marina Drive  
Hood River, OR 97031*