

JEFF HELFRICH
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

District 52
Clackamas, Hood River and Multnomah Counties



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony: House Bill 4152

Rep. Jeff Helfrich, House District 52

House Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee: 2/8/2018

Good afternoon Chair Evans, Vice Chair Boone, Vice Chair Esquivel, and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Jeff Helfrich, representative from House District 52. I am the Chief Sponsor of House Bill 4152, and Sen. Chuck Thomsen of Senate District 26 is the Chief Co-Sponsor. We are both residents of the City of Hood River and Hood River County.

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 4152, a bill to provide funding for training and equipment to the Hood River and Multnomah County Sheriff's Offices for wildfire recovery, mitigation and preparedness. HB4152 also requests that the funds be administered on or before April 30, 2018; declares a state of emergency, and in doing so asks that the bill be effective on passage. This funding will be used for basic equipment such as poles, helmets and lights. The ask is small. We are asking for \$150,000. Though small, the impact of this funding will be substantial.

As a former resident and City Councilor in Cascade Locks, current resident of the City of Hood River, resident for over a decade in Hood River County. I now have the honor and privilege to be the State representative of House District 52 which encompasses all of Hood River County, eastern Multnomah County and northern Clackamas County. I am here today because this fire ravaged my community. I would like to take a couple moments to speak beyond my prepared comments.

As you will hear in testimony today, HB4152 will provide needed training and equipment to the Hood River County and Multnomah County Sheriff's Offices. You will also hear testimony from people on the impact that the Eagle Creek Fire had on the area, their lives, families, the economy, and why having these basics matter not just to the Sheriff's Office but to keeping the community and visitors to our community safe; and therefore

matters for all of the House District, Senate District, and Oregonians and travelers from beyond who visit the Gorge.

As I stated, HB 4152-1, as amended, will provide funding to the Sheriffs' offices of Multnomah County and Hood River County for expenses related to wildfire recovery, mitigation and preparedness. The bill has a three-fold purpose:

- a. Provide equipment and training relating to prevention, assessment and mitigation of wildfires; and wildfire first responder training.
- b. This 2018 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, this 2018 Act takes effect on its passage.
- c. Funding is to be administered by the Office of Emergency Management on or before April 30th of this year.

In my conversation with Governor Brown yesterday, I shared the importance of House Bill 4152 and that this ask existed. Although the funding request is small, the impact on the State but a major benefit for those on the front lines of public safety in the wake of the Eagle Creek Fire as the area attempts to recover physically and economically from the fire. We ask that you hear the testimonies today that speak to the importance and potential positive impact of this bill on our community and the visitors to the Gorge throughout the State and beyond. Thank you.