

**From:** [Steve Thorpe](#)  
**To:** [HWREC Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** High cost associated with moving back into manufactured home parks  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 16, 2021 4:08:02 PM

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Dear Oregon Legislature House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery,

My wife and I, together with people throughout southern Oregon, are grateful to the Oregon Legislature for creating your Special Committee, and we are grateful to your Special Committee for investigating how things are going with wildfire recovery in our state as well as what needs to be done to assist in the recovery.

Additionally, we are very thankful for the many things that Oregon government agencies, FEMA, Jackson County, local governments, and others are doing to aid the people of southern Oregon as we continue our efforts to recover from the September 2020 wildfires. The partnership among federal, state, regional, and local governments plus public and private agencies has done much to help with the cleanup, to help with locating housing and resources for people, and to help with the early planning for recovery. We all are very grateful for what the inter-government and inter-agency partnership has done to assist us in many ways. We could not survive and move forward without the partnership's considerable help and guidance.

I write to the Special Committee about an issue that has popped up as a barrier for us moving back to a manufactured home park. We believe this will also be a barrier for others who would like to move back into a manufactured home park or a mobile home park.

To set the context, my wife and I owned a manufactured home that burned down in the Mountain View Estates (MVE) manufactured home park in Talent during the Almeda fire on September 8, 2020. The MVE park is privately owned by the Hudson family. They continue their ownership of the park, and they have been working with the government agencies and service companies to plan for and welcome back any and all of us former MVE residents who want to move back. Their work to help us move back has been good.

Fortunately, we had insurance on our home that was destroyed and we have enough money from our insurance settlement plus some family contributions to pay for the new manufactured home. My wife and I have identified a specific new manufactured home that we are in the process of buying. Our new manufactured home dealer says our new home will be available for installation at the end of June 2021.

All that is good. The challenge now is the high additional cost that will be charged by a licensed construction company to do the lot preparation and related construction tasks to help with the installation of our new manufactured home. We were shocked by the exorbitant cost

that licensed construction companies will charge for the total set of construction projects that we will need to pay in order for us to put in our new home. Please note that the costs do not come from the manufactured home dealers. The costs are for the construction projects that need to be done by a licensed construction company in order to completely install a new manufactured home.

At first, we heard that licensed construction companies would most likely charge \$30,000 to construct a new foundation, a new pad, a new carport driveway with awning, a new patio with awning, and a new storage shed. The \$30,000 would also cover the costs for connecting the electrical system, the water system, the sewer system, the costs for permits, etc.

Now, we have received a verbal estimate from one construction company that the cost for the construction tasks is \$61,000. Similarly, one of our former neighbors in MVE received a written estimate of \$59,775.00 from another construction company for the construction projects necessary for him to install his new manufactured home.

This \$60,000 figure for these related construction projects is cost prohibitive! Our insurance settlement did not provide any money to cover the costs of constructing a new foundation, a new pad, a new carport drive, and a new patio. It is hard to imagine how anyone in southern Oregon will be able to afford the high costs of these construction tasks necessary to put in a new manufactured home.

We hope the Special Committee and others can investigate this situation and find out if there are ways to mitigate the high costs of the construction projects required to put new manufactured homes into parks that were devastated by the September 2020 wildfires in southern Oregon. I list below a few suggestions that might help.

- Eliminate permits and the fees required to obtain the permits so that construction companies could lower their construction costs that they would pass on to individuals seeking their services. (For example, the Talent City Council is meeting on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> to consider rescinding a community development fee and an affordable housing fee. Apparently, the city of Phoenix has already removed such fees to help locate construction costs for rebuilding.)
- Perhaps FEMA could give grants to the owners of the manufactured home parks to cover the construction costs for building new foundations, new pads, new carport drives, and new patios for new manufactured homes because insurance companies did not provide funds to manufactured home residents for the replacement of these items damaged by the wildfires.
- Perhaps FEMA could give grants to the individuals who had manufactured homes that were destroyed by the September 2020 Oregon wildfires so that the individuals could move

back into their previous manufactured home park. These grants would cover the construction costs for building new foundations, new pads, new carport drives, and new patios for new manufactured homes because insurance companies did not provide funds to manufactured home residents for the replacement of these items damaged by the wildfires.

- Perhaps the state of Oregon could give tax credits to offset the construction costs for building new foundations, new pads, new carport drives, and new patios for new manufactured homes because insurance companies did not provide funds for the replacement of these items damaged by the wildfires.

In conclusion, I am grateful to the Special Committee for your attention to this high cost of moving back into manufactured homes. We in southern Oregon would appreciate your investigation into this matter and we would appreciate any assistance you all could provide to help us overcome this cost barrier that hinders people from moving back into manufactured homes in our region.