

# House Concurrent Resolution 31

Sponsored by Representative WILDE, Senator MANNING JR, Representatives CATE, GRAYBER

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Commends Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District and other first responders for their heroic actions in fighting Santiam Fire.

## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1  
2       Whereas on August 16, 2020, thunderstorms moved across the State of Oregon and lightning  
3 ignited multiple wildfires, including the Beachie Creek Fire, the Lionshead Fire and the P-515 Fire;  
4 and

5       Whereas on September 7, powerful winds caused the wildfires to explode in size and merge into  
6 the Santiam Fire, a situation exacerbated by multiple spot fires caused by downed power lines; and

7       Whereas in the early morning hours of September 8, the Santiam Fire raced westward down the  
8 Santiam Canyon, quickly endangering many communities, including Idanha and Detroit; and

9       Whereas firefighters across the Santiam Valley tirelessly and selflessly worked to save lives and  
10 homes, including those with the Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District (RFPD); and

11       Whereas Idanha and Detroit were urgently evacuated and fire crews were ordered to fall back  
12 in the face of the catastrophic and unpredictable wind-whipped wildfire; and

13       Whereas when all their escape routes were cut off, a small team of Idanha-Detroit RFPD fire-  
14 fighters were backed up to the shore of Detroit Lake at the Mongold boat launch, where they made  
15 a desperate last-ditch stand against the raging fire and fought to save the lives of more than 70  
16 evacuees; and

17       Whereas Captain Joe Darby and volunteer firefighter Ethan Sitton managed the safety zone,  
18 organized supplies, made escape preparations and worked to keep the evacuees calm and safe; and

19       Whereas Sitton later said of their predicament, “no matter how bleak it all looked or how hard  
20 it was to operate ... really what was on our mind was survival and survival of our evacuees”; and

21       Whereas a momentary wind shift provided the firefighters a brief opening to evacuate from  
22 Mongold, and with help from other agencies they seized the opportunity, bravely leading a convoy  
23 out of the area through back roads surrounded by flames; and

24       Whereas no lives were lost in the action that has come to be known as the “Mongold Stand”;  
25 and

26       Whereas Chief Will Ewing, Deputy Chief Damon Faust and Chief Kyle McMann were fearless  
27 and calm in command, recognizing the threat to their communities and developing tactics and  
28 strategies to keep their crews motivated and effective; and

29       Whereas senior firefighter Ruben Arellano, who was thrust into a line leadership position and  
30 showed remarkable composure and bravery in the most challenging circumstances, later said, “this  
31 is what we signed up for ... at the end of day you have a job to do”; and

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1       Whereas other volunteers who made sacrifices and put their lives on the line for their commu-  
2       nities include senior medic Jillian Gempel, firefighter Ron Harris, Lieutenant Laura Harris and re-  
3       cruit Roberto Delamontaigne; and

4       Whereas Idanha-Detroit RFPD firefighters signed on for this work to help the people they care  
5       about while giving back to the places they call home; and

6       Whereas in the face of unimaginable adversity, the firefighters of the Idanha-Detroit RFPD  
7       saved many lives with their courage, determination and resourcefulness; and

8       Whereas when their communities needed them most, the Idanha-Detroit RFPD stood strong; and

9       Whereas the Santiam Fire was ultimately one of the most destructive wildfires in the history  
10      of the State of Oregon; and

11      Whereas in the aftermath of the wildfire, Detroit and Idanha residents have begun rebuilding  
12      efforts in their communities, which suffered horrific destruction; now, therefore,

13      **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

14      That we, the members of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly, recognize and honor the actions  
15      of the firefighters of the Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District, who battled the Santiam Fire  
16      and saved many lives; and be it further

17      Resolved, That we express our gratitude to all the public and private entities and first  
18      responders who fought the Santiam Fire with heroism and great determination; and be it further

19      Resolved, That we extend our sympathy and condolences to the many Oregonians who suffered  
20      unimaginable loss as a result of the Santiam Fire, and we declare our full support for the massive  
21      rebuilding effort in the affected communities.

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