

February 7, 2023

Representative Dacia Grayber
Chair, House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
82nd Legislative Assembly
Oregon House of Representatives
Oregon State Capitol

RE: HB 2898

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Lewis and Tran, Members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for holding a hearing for HB 2898.

For the record, my name is Jami Cate, and I'm the State Representative for House District 11, serving rural parts of Linn and Marion counties.

This is a simple bill, and I don't think needs much in way of explanation, though I'd be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to say: the Labor Day wildfires were truly devastating, and their effects will last generations.

But as a person who likes to look for the silver linings in the worst of circumstances, I will offer this: I think we as a state have learned a lot, and I hope those hard-learned lessons will be utilized to make Oregon more resilient to—not if but when—we experience natural disasters in the future—and we all know they *will* happen.

This bill is essentially an update to HB2809 from the 2021 Session, which passed both chambers unanimously apart from one unrelated protest vote.

That bill allowed RV citing on private property where the home was destroyed by the 2020 wildfires, and created not only a means of temporary long-term housing opportunities for wildfire victims during a historic housing shortage, but also a means of remaining in their communities while securing their properties—and discouraging crimes of opportunity in the area by maintaining an active and watchful presence.

What is important to note about 2021's HB2809 are two things: it was limited to RV citing after the 2020 Labor Day Fires, and only granted a 2-year allowance. I am not trying to criticize our efforts in 2021, but in hindsight, it was too narrow of a scope and I think we can all agree, believing people would be back in their homes within 2 years was an overly optimistic goal.

The reality is, many folks are *still* waiting to even get their building permits. With our construction industry operating to its max, incredible inflation on building materials, and supply chain disruptions further complicating this industry, there is no telling when folks will be handed the keys to their new homes and finally start their next chapter.

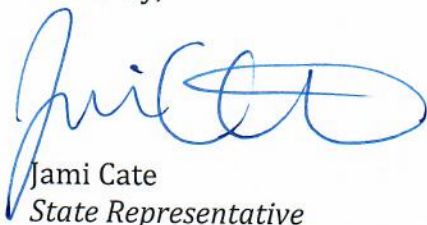
This year's HB2898 does two important things:

1. It extends the original 2-year allowance for the 2020 wildfires to align with the new 2030 deadline for obtaining building permits—giving Labor Day Fire victims that same time frame to occupy an RV while actively rebuilding their homes.
2. It proactively creates this allowance of RV citing on your private property for 5 years for any *future* natural disaster victims—which is hopefully a more realistic timeline for victims to rebuild and return home.

In the recovery efforts of the 2020 wildfires a couple of things have become abundantly clear and one is: natural disasters will happen, so the more we can do to be proactive in putting the protections in place for the future that we discovered during the 2020 fires, the better off we will be in responding quickly and effectively to help victims recover.

Passing this bill is an important part of that proactive preparation. Thank you for taking the time to hear HB 2898, and I urge your timely passage as this protection has already expired for our 2020 wildfire victims.

Sincerely,



Jami Cate
State Representative
Oregon House District 11