



# Crook County

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March 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Legislative Committee,

I am writing to you as a Crook County Commissioner and a member of the Post-Paulina Rangeland Fire Protection Association, to express my strong support for House Bill 3349 and House Bill 3350. These bills are crucial for enhancing the capabilities and resources available to rangeland protection associations like ours, which play a vital role in managing and mitigating wildfires in rural areas of Oregon.

This past fire season, our community faced unprecedented challenges. The Durgan, Crazy Creek, Wiley Flat, and Rail Ridge fires collectively burned over 14,631.5 acres within our boundaries, significantly impacting our land and livelihoods. Our volunteers and ranchers dedicated over 2,660.25 hours fighting these fires, often sacrificing essential agricultural duties to protect our community. Despite these efforts, we faced situations where the fires overcame extensive barriers, threatening lives, property, and the environment.

House Bill 3349 proposes essential measures that will empower agencies like the State Forestry Department to better support rangeland protection associations through actions and resources critical to our firefighting efforts. Additionally, the establishment of the Rangeland Protection Association Fund will provide much-needed financial backing to ensure that our volunteers are equipped with the necessary tools to efficiently manage and respond to fires.

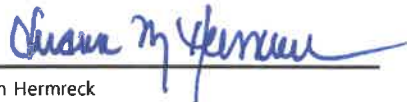
House Bill 3350's provision to allocate funds specifically for the enhancement of firefighting groups in rural areas will directly benefit associations like ours, enabling us to maintain and upgrade our firefighting equipment and ensure readiness for future emergencies.

The support from the state is not just a funding matter but a critical enhancement of our ability to protect our communities and manage natural resources effectively. The passage of these bills will affirm the state's commitment to supporting rural areas that are often the first line of defense against wildfires.

I urge you to pass House Bill 3349 and House Bill 3350. Doing so will not only bolster our current efforts but also secure a safer and more resilient future for the rural communities of Oregon.

Thank you for considering this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

X 

Susan Hermreck  
County Commissioner