

Submitter: ELAINE BRYSON

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3149

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to support the -2 amendments to House Bill 3149 to provide a one-year extension to wildfire impacted school districts. I currently am the Board Chair for McKenzie School District #68. Our small rural school district families were particularly hit very hard with the Labor Day fires. With 225 students K-12 prior to the fires we have slowly, but surly been seeing increase in enrollment, from a low of approximately 160 students right after the fire to 197 today. This funding will allow us to continue the levels of staff and education needs of our students as our community continues to rebuild, and will allow us time to prepare for funding reductions as we are aware that it will still take time for the rebuilding process to be completed.

Without this extension our District would lose \$390,000.00 the equivalent of about 19 school days or 5 teachers. Which is a very significant loss for a small district as ours. In the last four years these funds have allowed us to continue the same levels of staffing to serve our students as they have returned to the community.

Our community has come together in the rebuilding process and has accessed several state, local and federal funding sources to rebuild. One such program has just completed placing 15 affordable houses on the property of a burned mobile home park. Another group is in the process of building 6 affordable housing units in Blue River . With projects as these we are confident that with just a bit more time we should be near our pre-fire enrollment numbers.

I wish to thank the Legislature for all of the support our fire impacted communities and school districts have received, it has helped tremendously.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support of the -2 amendment to HB 3149, a one-year funding lifeline to our schools, students, families and community  
Please let me know if I can answer and questions for you.

Sincerely,

Elaine Bryson

Board Chair

McKenzie School District #68