



2/16/2025

To: Chair Sen. Anthony Broadman
Vice-Chair Sen. Mike McLane
Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

From: Crooked River Ranch Club and Maintenance Association

RE: HB 4134 -1: Support for Amendment 1 to HB 4134: Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC)

Dear Chair Broadman and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of **House Bill 4134-1**, specifically the inclusion of funding for the **Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) at 0.1%**. Programs supported through OCC provide critical assistance to communities working to reduce wildfire risk, improve forest and rangeland health, and protect homes, infrastructure, and wildlife habitat.

In our community, partnerships with conservation corps crews and affiliated programs have helped complete vegetation management and fuels reduction work that would otherwise have been difficult to accomplish due to limited staffing, funding, or technical capacity. These projects often address high-priority areas that directly affect community safety and landscape resilience.

- This program is absolutely vital to protecting our community. We believe The Heart of Oregon crews provide the single most important preventive opportunity to avoid massive losses from wildfire. Our staff works side by side with the crews to create the best prescription possible—balancing wildlife habitat, park-like finished conditions, and the original mission of fuel reduction. The fuel reduction work gives local firefighters a critical advantage, allowing them to defend our perimeter against uncontrolled wildfires.
- Equally important, this work provides young crew members with hands-on experience in challenging field conditions, building practical skills in wildfire mitigation and land stewardship. Programs like The Heart of Oregon not only help communities complete critical mitigation work but also build the next generation workforce needed to address Oregon's growing wildfire challenges.
- A strong example of the impact of these programs occurred in Sundown Canyon on the Deschutes River side of Crooked River Ranch. This area consists of extremely rugged terrain, making access and mitigation efforts both challenging and costly. Through partnership with Heart of Oregon Corps, a 10-acre section was treated to reduce hazardous fuels and improve overall landscape resilience. Prior to treatment, the canyon contained dense juniper encroachment, heavy ladder fuels, and continuous vegetation that



posed significant wildfire risk. Given the steep slopes and proximity to homes along the rim and within surrounding neighborhoods, a fire starting in this drainage could have rapidly moved upslope under wind-driven conditions. The Heart of Oregon crew thinned hazardous vegetation, reduced fuel continuity, and improved defensible space in this high-priority area.

- In June 2025, the Alder Fire and Flat Fire burned approximately 22,000 acres on the west side of Crooked River Ranch. Fortunately, only one location of the fire jumped the river onto the Crooked River Ranch side of the Deschutes Canyon. Because Sundown Canyon had been treated directly opposite the Alder Fire, our community was in a stronger position to mitigate risk. Knowing that this proactive work helped protect our residents, homes, and infrastructure provides a tremendous sense of relief.
- Additional critical areas for fuels reduction include Hill Road, Horny Hollow Trail Road, and Chinook Road, which are key ingress and egress routes serving five RV parks, cabins, businesses, the golf course, and approximately 75 homes. These combined areas cover over 50 acres of high-priority, high-risk land that must be actively managed to protect life, property, and infrastructure.

Programs like these not only improve safety and resilience on the ground but also help develop a skilled natural resource workforce to carry out the increasing amount of wildfire mitigation and land stewardship work needed across Oregon.

Continued investment through **HB 4134-1** will help ensure that communities like ours can continue to partner on meaningful projects that protect people, property, and natural resources. For these reasons, **Crooked River Ranch, HOA strongly supports House Bill 4134-1.**

Sincerely,

Dan McRae
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