

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No.:	8
Work Plan:	Fire Protection
Topic:	Annual Topic: Approval of Forest Protection Association District Budgets and Rates
Presentation Title:	Approval of the Forest Protection Association District 2026 Fiscal Budgets and Rates
Date of Presentation:	June 4, 2025
Contact Information:	Michael Curran, Fire Protection Division - Chief 503-480-6675; Michael.Curran@odf.oregon.gov Ron Graham, Fire Protection Division - Deputy Chief of Operations 971-718-6862; Ron.Graham@odf.oregon.gov

SUMMARY

ORS 477.265 requires the Board of Forestry to annually review the forest protection district budgets and pass final approval on all district budgets including the prorated acreage assessment rates.

CONTEXT

Oregon's wildfire protection system has historically provided an effective and efficient method of addressing the state's fire protection responsibilities – both in initial attack and large fire management needs. The system uses a “complete and coordinated” methodology and is funded through a complex mix of landowner and state general fund dollars. The system provides policy, prevention, and suppression activities at the national, statewide and district levels. The delivery of these services is reviewed annually and predominately funded through the development of fiscal protection budgets in which the costs are proportioned on a legislative determined statutory ratio of landowner and general fund dollars.

Budget Development Process:

Consistent with statutory direction¹, each year in January, the state office and districts begin developing a fire protection budget to fund activities for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). During the development process, district budget committees² analyze and review the draft budget prior to making recommendations to the District Forester. The budget committee then carries the final recommended budget to the Board of Directors of the Forest Protective Association for consideration at the annual spring association meeting. Additionally, each district holds a public budget meeting³ for any landowners affected by the budget to provide an opportunity for any additional public comments on the budget.

¹ ORS 477.235 Forester to prepare tentative budget estimates for districts.

² ORS 477.240 Advisory and guidance committees

³ ORS 477.255 Holding of budget meeting; revision and submission for final approval.

The last step in the district fiscal protection budget process is submittal to the State Forester and then official approval by the Board of Forestry in June. Attachment 1 provides a summary of the fiscal year 2026 recommended budgets.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS

Throughout the development of the fiscal year 2026 budgets and spring association meetings, landowners have expressed appreciation for the level of protection and service they receive from the Associations and the Department. Association meetings have been very collaborative and productive with excellent dialog focusing on important fire protection related topics. Attachments 2 and 3, annual letters to the State Forester and public budget hearing comments, highlight some of the topics discussed at the district budget committee, fire protection association, and public budget meetings. The conversations largely consisted of the continued increase in district budgets and the need for a permanent funding solution and the uncertainties around federal funds. The Eastern Oregon Forest Protective Association, Klamath-Lake Protective Association, and Walker Range Protective Associations chose to not support their district fiscal budget, but all other Forest Protective Associations chose to support their district fiscal budgets. Though, support was not unanimous for all those Associations.

Per OAR 629-041-0035, one landowner (Attachment 4) is appealing the fiscal budget with a remedy sought of requesting the board to seek an alternative funding mechanism to give the landowners a rate relief to cover the cost increase instead of passing the funding off to private forest and grazing landowners.

Upon review of the letters from the landowners and the facts described and presented in the proposed final order (Attachment 5), the Board may:

1. Remand the matter to Department staff for further review on such issues as the Board specifies and to prepare a revised proposed order as appropriate;
2. Reject the proposed order and direct the Department to prepare a different final order; or
3. Adopt the proposed order as the Board's final order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department recommends the board approves the following:

1. The Department recommends the Board approve all Fiscal Year 2026 forest protection district budgets and prorated acreage rates as presented in Attachment 1.
2. The Department recommends that in the event the legislature adopts additional funding sources that may alter forest protection district budgets and prorated acreage rates that the Board directs the Department to adjust to integrate such revenues prior to sending the certified rates to each County Assessor's Office.
3. The Department recommends that the Board adopt the proposed final order as written for Roy M. Beyer.

ATTACHMENT

- (1) FY 2026 Protection Budget Summary, by District, and Area
- (2) Letters to the State Forester from Forest Protective Associations
- (3) Public Budget Hearing Minutes
- (4) Budget Appeal
- (5) Proposed Final Order

Board of Forestry ODF Protection Budget & Assessment Summary

Fiscal Year2026General Fund Split50.00%

	Protected Acres				Budgeted Dollars			Public Rates*						Private Rates**						Revenue****
	Class Type	FY2025	FY2026	Y/Y Change	FY2025	FY2026	Y/Y Change	FY2025	FY2026	Y/Y Change	Agency Admin	OFLPF***	FINAL FY2026	FY2025	FY2026	Y/Y Change	(WPA)****	OFLPF***	FINAL FY2026	FY2026 PROJECTION
NORTHWEST OREGON																				
Northwest Oregon	Timber	1,762,144.46	1,761,600.03	-0.03%	\$6,861,162	\$7,988,877	16.44%	\$3.7205	\$3.9471	6.09%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$5.2033	\$1.8602	\$1.9736	6.09%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$2.0236	\$5,488,575
West Oregon	Timber	1,084,023.13	1,085,708.59	0.16%	\$4,204,476	\$4,647,192	10.53%	\$3.5440	\$3.7856	6.82%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$5.0418	\$1.7720	\$1.8928	6.82%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$1.9428	\$3,701,480
North Cascade	Timber	659,489.65	656,441.53	-0.46%	\$3,370,692	\$3,796,713	12.64%	\$5.6178	\$4.4313	-21.12%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$5.6875	\$2.8089	\$2.2157	-21.12%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$2.2657	\$2,779,546
NOA TOTALS & AVERAGES	Timber	3,505,657.24	3,503,750.15	-0.05%	\$14,436,330	\$16,432,782	13.83%	\$4.2941	\$4.0547	-5.58%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$5.3109	\$2.1471	\$2.0273	-5.58%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$2.0773	\$11,969,601

SOUTHERN OREGON																				
Southwest Oregon	Timber	1,761,584.84	1,762,010.08	0.02%	\$11,958,793	\$13,064,208	9.24%	\$7.2183	\$9.0870	25.89%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$10.3432	\$3.6092	\$4.5435	25.89%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$4.5935	\$10,917,423
	Grazing	131,868.40	131,969.38	0.08%	\$311,337	\$1,244,403	299.70%	\$2.0191	\$2.3520	16.49%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$3.6332	\$1.0096	\$1.1760	16.49%	\$0.0000	\$0.0750	\$1.2510	
Coos FPA	Timber	1,513,219.79	1,515,018.52	0.12%	\$9,169,123	\$10,341,588	12.79%	\$5.7238	\$6.0198	5.17%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$7.2760	\$2.8619	\$3.0099	5.17%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$3.0599	\$8,326,457
	Grazing	74,736.80	72,761.78	-2.64%	\$281,969	\$318,000	12.78%	\$4.4851	\$4.4441	-0.91%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$5.7253	\$2.2426	\$2.2220	-0.91%	\$0.0000	\$0.0750	\$2.2970	
Douglas FPA	Timber	1,404,162.37	1,416,522.94	0.88%	\$9,262,935	\$10,303,299	11.23%	\$6.5290	\$6.9940	7.12%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$8.2502	\$3.2645	\$3.4970	7.12%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$3.5470	\$8,508,900
	Grazing	261,679.31	259,718.14	-0.75%	\$921,887	\$1,024,259	11.10%	\$3.0998	\$3.2757	5.68%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$4.5569	\$1.5499	\$1.6379	5.68%	\$0.0000	\$0.0750	\$1.7129	
South Cascade	Timber	1,135,791.46	1,135,136.80	-0.06%	\$5,639,093	\$6,281,346	11.39%	\$5.0093	\$4.4608	-10.95%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$5.7170	\$2.5046	\$2.2304	-10.95%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$2.2804	\$4,589,726
Western Lane	Timber	791,952.16	791,947.07	0.00%	\$3,503,783	\$3,852,130	9.94%	\$3.7705	\$4.1752	10.73%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$5.4314	\$1.8852	\$2.0876	10.73%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$2.1376	\$2,535,701
SOA TOTALS & AVERAGES	Timber	6,606,710.62	6,620,635.41	0.21%	\$39,533,726	\$43,842,571	10.90%	\$5.6502	\$6.1474	8.80%	\$1.2062	\$0.0500	\$7.4036	\$2.8251	\$3.0737	8.80%	\$0.0000	\$0.0500	\$3.1237	\$34,878,207
	Grazing	468,284.51	464,449.30	-0.82%	\$1,515,193	\$2,586,662	70.71%	\$3.2013	\$3.3573	4.87%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$4.6385	\$1.6007	\$1.6786	4.87%	\$0.0000	\$0.0750	\$1.7536	

EASTERN OREGON																				
Central Oregon	Timber	1,027,174.29	1,014,737.32	-1.21%	\$7,915,236	\$8,825,107	11.50%	\$6.1505	\$7.8599	27.79%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$9.1411	\$3.0753	\$3.9300	27.79%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$3.7642	\$10,224,180
	Grazing	1,087,170.33	1,077,145.16	-0.92%	\$3,805,333	\$3,818,351	0.34%	\$3.2174	\$3.6483	13.39%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$4.9295	\$1.6087	\$1.8242	13.39%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$1.6584	
Northeast Oregon	Timber	846,205.07	836,387.78	-1.16%	\$5,279,229	\$5,676,979	7.53%	\$5.4665	\$6.5561	19.93%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$7.8373	\$2.7333	\$3.2781	19.93%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$3.1123	\$7,360,398
	Grazing	1,089,630.26	1,084,418.73	-0.48%	\$2,331,872	\$2,506,509	7.49%	\$2.1570	\$2.4300	12.66%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$3.7112	\$1.0785	\$1.2150	12.66%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$1.0492	
Klamath Lake	Timber	1,017,367.10	1,032,512.96	1.49%	\$6,128,023	\$6,954,332	13.48%	\$6.0055	\$6.1704	2.75%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$7.4516	\$3.0028	\$3.0852	2.75%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$2.9194	\$6,991,185
	Grazing	487,746.70	490,174.05	0.50%	\$1,009,848	\$1,198,703	18.70%	\$1.6408	\$2.0917	27.48%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$3.3729	\$0.8204	\$1.0459	27.48%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$0.8801	
Walker Range FPA	Timber	180,511.60	180,467.40	-0.02%	\$1,199,692	\$1,336,624	11.41%	\$4.9276	\$6.1713	25.24%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$7.4525	\$2.4638	\$3.0856	25.24%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$2.9198	\$698,215
	Grazing	2,502.33	2,505.27	0.12%	\$3,169	\$3,512	10.83%	\$0.9247	\$1.2224	32.20%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$2.5036	\$0.4623	\$0.6112	32.20%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$0.4454	
EOA TOTALS & AVERAGES	Timber	3,071,258.06	3,064,105.46	-0.23%	\$20,522,180	\$22,793,042	11.07%	\$5.6376	\$6.6894	18.66%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$7.9706	\$2.8188	\$3.3447	18.66%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$3.1789	\$25,273,978
	Grazing	2,667,049.62	2,654,243.21	-0.48%	\$7,150,222	\$7,527,075	5.27%	\$1.9850	\$2.3481	18.30%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$3.6293	\$0.9925	\$1.1741	18.30%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$1.0083	

STATEWIDE TOTALS & AVERAGES																				Includes Area & Salem
By Land Class Type	Timber	13,183,625.92	13,188,491.02	0.04%	\$74,492,236	\$83,068,395	11.51%	\$5.3070	\$5.8049	9.38%	\$1.2062	\$0.0583	\$7.0694	\$2.6535	\$2.9024	9.38%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0583	\$2.7200	\$83,981,873
	Grazing	3,135,334.13	3,118,692.51	-0.53%	\$8,665,416	\$10,113,737	16.71%	\$2.5063	\$2.7806	10.95%	\$1.2062	\$0.0750	\$4.0618	\$1.2531	\$1.3903	10.95%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0750	\$1.2245	
Combined Total		16,318,960.05	16,307,183.53	-0.07%	\$83,157,652	\$93,182,132	12.05%	\$4.2751	\$4.6907	9.72%	\$1.2062	\$0.0650	\$5.9619	\$2.1376	\$2.3453	9.72%	-\$0.2408	\$0.0650	\$2.1695	

AREA & SALEM BUDGET UNITS*****																				Included in Above Total
Salem Protection Division	Total Acres	16,318,960.05	16,307,183.53	-0.07%	\$8,002,958	\$8,860,427	10.71%													\$10,227,358
Northwest Oregon Area	Total Acres	3,505,657.24	3,503,750.15	-0.05%	\$337,376	\$367,480	8.92%													\$293,688
Southern Oregon Area	Total Acres	7,074,995.13	7,085,084.71	0.14%	\$595,447	\$675,761	13.49%													\$621,771
Eastern Oregon Area	Total Acres	5,738,307.68	5,718,348.67	-0.35%	\$686,078	\$797,206	16.20%													\$717,270

LEGISLATIVE ADOPTED BUDGET (LAB) ALLOCATION COMPARISON				
Other Fund (7100) & General Fund (1120) Combined Totals		FY2025	FY2026	Y/Y Change
	LAB Combined Funds Dollars Allocation	\$73,979,085	\$76,100,855	2.87%
	Fiscal Year Combined Funds Dollars Budgeted	\$83,157,652	\$93,182,132	12.05%
	Budgeted Combined Funds Dollars Over/Under LAB	\$9,178,567	\$17,081,277	86.10%
General Fund (1120) Only Totals	LAB General Fund Dollars Allocated	\$26,569,227	\$27,105,054	2.02%
	Fiscal Year General Fund Dollars Budgeted	\$31,435,845	\$34,767,122	10.60%
	Budgeted General Fund Dollars Over/Under LAB	\$4,866,618	\$7,662,068	57.44%

NOTES

* Agency Admin rate assessed to public landowners, per SB5522 and HB5024A.
** Lands not owned by public entities may not be assessed in excess of 50% of the pro rata cost per acre, per ORS 477.230.
*** Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund additional per private and public acre assessment, per ORS 477.880.
**** Wildfire Protection Act (WPA) passed in 2013, in accordance with ORS 477.777, includes Eastside Rate Relief for private landowners only.
***** Projected Revenue includes all Private, Public, Agreement, and General Fund (WPA included). Dollar amount may be lower or higher than budgeted dollars due to landowner Actual Cost Computation (ACC) carryover debit/credit to collection rates, per ORS 477.232. Salem and Area revenue also included as these costs are built into district budgets.
***** Area and Salem data is only for reference. Areas and Salem do not show their own rates as their budgeted rates are included in each of the district rates. Area and Salem budgeted dollars are only for reference, as budget numbers are part of each district's budgeted numbers.

AGENDA ITEM 8
Attachment 1
Page 1 of 1

FY26 Protection BOF Budget Summary

Coos Forest Protective Association

DIRECTORS

JIM CARR
IAN THOMPSON
JEFF MILLER
JASON RICHARDSON
NICK WINNER
TIM TRUAX
CHARLIE WATERMAN
BRANDON WOOD
WHITNEY HENNEMAN

63612 Fifth Road



Coos Bay, Oregon 97420



TELEPHONE
(541) 267-3161

FAX
(541) 266-8452

May 15, 2025

Kate Skinner, State Forester
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support House Bill 3940 – Wildfire Funding

State Forester Skinner:

As the President of the Coos Forest Protective Association, I'd like to inform you of our concerns regarding Oregon's current wildfire funding model and encourage you to support HB3940. Oregon's current funding system is no longer sufficient to meet the demands of today's wildfire crisis, and needs to change to ensure that the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the three operating Forest Protective Associations (FPA) can continue to provide an adequate level of protection and maintain Oregon's complete and coordinated fire protection system.

Oregon's complete and coordinated fire protection system is the premier firefighting system in the United States. This public/private partnership relies on costs being allocated fairly to those who benefit from the complete and coordinated system. This is accomplished by each operating and non-operating FPA analyzing performance, capacity, and determining an adequate level of protection for their respective districts, then approving a fiscal budget that supports that level of fire protection.

The intent behind the laws in ORS Chapter 477 that govern these processes was for landowners to pay for adequate protection at the local level. The intent was never for ratepayers to provide an adequate level of funding for ODF's administrative functions at the Salem or Area level, costs which ballooned two years ago with the passage of SB762 and again this year by another 40%. There is no other example in Oregon's system where state agencies pass along their administrative costs to ratepayers. It is these costs that are contributing to the financial burden put on landowners at a pace that far exceeds a landowner's ability to recoup costs from those lands. HB3940 would remove these costs from district budgets as well as redirect other landowner dollars to district budgets. This will provide some rate relief and bring the system more into alignment with the original intent of the forest laws.

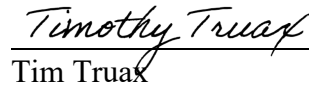
Oregon's current funding model was created during a time when the threat and impacts of fire were mainly limited to forest landowners directly, and the cause of large, costly fires was frequently caused by forest operations. Forest operation-related ignitions over the last several decades have been drastically reduced with newer technology. There were zero fires caused by forest operations during the 2023 and 2024 fire seasons on the CFPA district. Currently, the

leading causes of fire ignitions on the Coos Forest Protective Association (CFPA) protected lands are directly related to the general public.

While fire ignitions from landowner activities have been decreasing, fires resulting from public and natural ignitions have been wreaking devastation on a scale not seen since the formation of organized firefighting systems. Last year alone, over 1.9 million acres burned across all jurisdictions in Oregon, a record that has been broken multiple times over the last 10 years. Over the last decade, we've seen fires that have turned cities into ashes and threatened major metropolitan areas. Fires have sent unhealthy air to every corner of the state and threatened the watersheds that provide clean water for our cities and communities. These fires have had a significant impact on wildlife, recreation, and tourism, and have threatened what Oregon is known for: our forests. It is truly an all-Oregonian problem. HB3940 provides funding options to make paying for large fires an all-Oregonian solution, and provides a fund to ensure ODF and the FPAs have enough money available to pay their contractors for the work they do on these large incidents.

The Coos Forest Protective Association has been providing fire protection in Oregon since 1910. We have a passion for protecting Oregon's forests and communities, and that is why we are encouraging your support of HB3940.

Respectfully,



Tim Truax
President, Board of Directors
Coos Forest Protective Association

Kate Skinner
Interim Oregon State Forester
OR Dept. of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

May 15, 2025

Dear Ms. Skinner:

Your Northwest Oregon Forest Protective Association sends you this letter to honor our Association's lengthy history of cooperation – in our mutual aid corporate relationship – between the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Astoria, Forest Grove and Tillamook Districts. We appreciate ODF's continued participation in our mutual aid corporation and your Fire Protection Division's defense of our public and private lands in Northwest Oregon from wildland fire.

We thank you, the State Forester, all ODF leadership and especially the dedicated employees that make the complete and coordinated fire protection system – WORK. *Thank you!*

The Northwest Oregon Forest Protective Association held our annual budget meeting on April 2, 2025. After collegial discussion we unanimously passed our Patrol Assessment budget. As chairperson, I wish to share the following in the spirit of continued cooperation and improvement.

- I appreciate the ODF's commitment to cost containment and ask that commitment continue strongly into the next biennium. Overhead costs from Salem and post-session personnel costs are *wildcards* making budget planning difficult for our Association.
- The geographical landscape of Oregon fire is changing. Our District is experiencing more small fires. Also, please consider the timing, geographic location and size of fires as you deploy severity resources and pre-deploy resources during late-season east-wind events.
- Employee hiring, retention and growth are three key concerns for ensuring we have an elite team. Salem policies must support recruiting, training and developing the *current and next generation* of wildland firefighters.
- State budget woes that penalize *must be avoided*. Our key resources are ODF personnel, our relationships and our commitment to Oregon's lands. We work better together than apart. Please work to keep our unique fire protection system functioning smoothly in 2025 and beyond.

I would be happy to answer any questions and can be contacted at 503-910-4434.

Sincerely,

Kathryn A. VanNatta
Northwest Oregon Forest Protective Association Chairperson

Klamath Forest Protective Association

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON

ORGANIZED TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVE FOREST PROTECTION

May 23, 2025

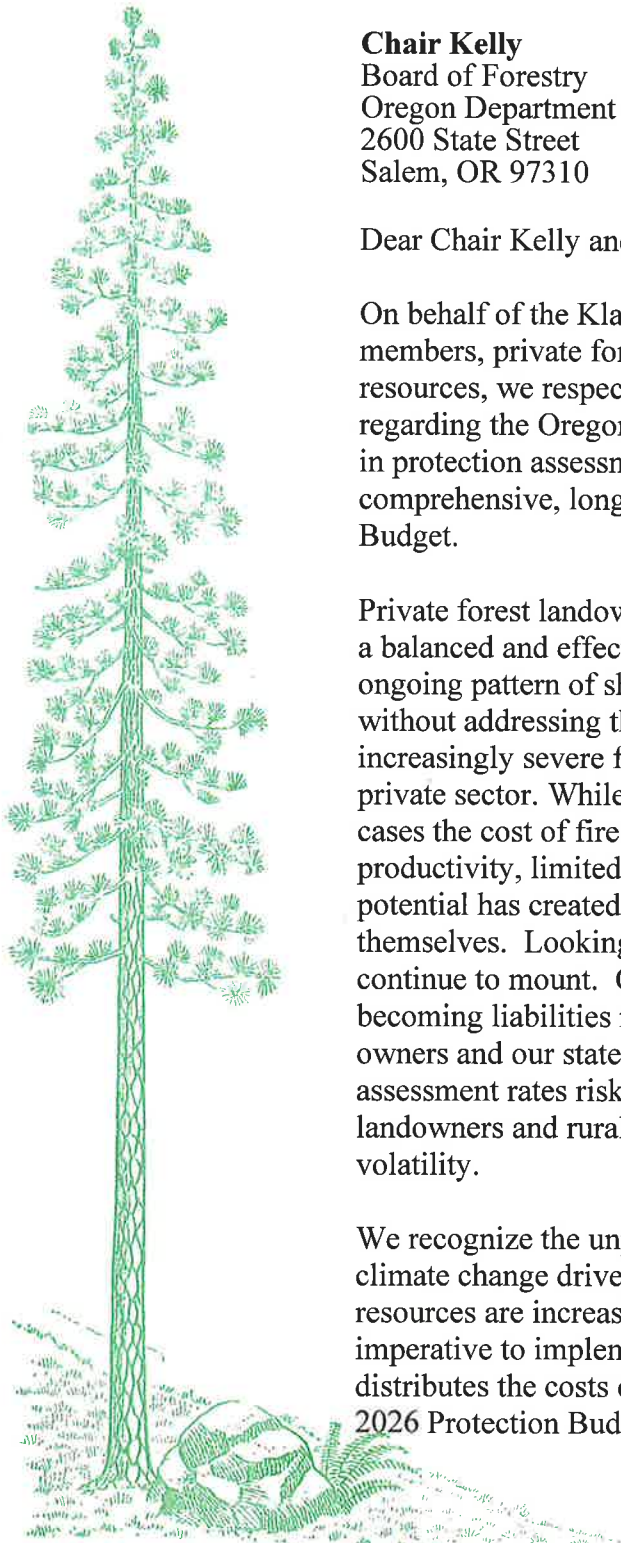
Chair Kelly
Board of Forestry
Oregon Department of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Chair Kelly and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Klamath Forest Protection Association (KFPA) and our members, private forest landowners and stewards of Oregon's natural resources, we respectfully submit this letter to express our deep concern regarding the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) proposed increases in protection assessment rates and to underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive, long-term fire funding solution in the 2026 Protection Budget.

Private forest landowners have long partnered with the State in supporting a balanced and effective wildland fire protection system. However, the ongoing pattern of shifting fire suppression costs toward landowners without addressing the systemic fiscal imbalance exacerbated by increasingly severe fire seasons has placed an unsustainable burden on the private sector. While every landowner's situation is different, in most cases the cost of fire protection especially on the eastside with low productivity, limited logging and milling infrastructure, and high wildfire potential has created conditions where the acres may not pay for themselves. Looking ahead, this trajectory becomes worse as costs continue to mount. Our timberland and grazing assets are quickly becoming liabilities rather than the assets they could and should be for the owners and our state as a whole. The recent proposals to raise protection assessment rates risk further eroding that partnership, especially for small landowners and rural communities already grappling with economic volatility.

We recognize the unprecedented challenges ODF faces, particularly as climate change drives longer, more destructive fire seasons and state resources are increasingly strained. However, this makes it all the more imperative to implement a durable funding framework that equitably distributes the costs of wildfire readiness, suppression, and resilience. The 2026 Protection Budget must reflect a holistic strategy, one that secures



Klamath Forest Protective Association

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON

ORGANIZED TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVE FOREST PROTECTION

stable public investment, leverages federal partnerships, and reaffirms the shared responsibility model that has guided Oregon's fire protection system for decades.

We stand ready to collaborate with the Department, lawmakers, and fellow stakeholders to pursue a solution that ensures a resilient, fair, and sustainable future for Oregon's forests and the communities that depend on them.

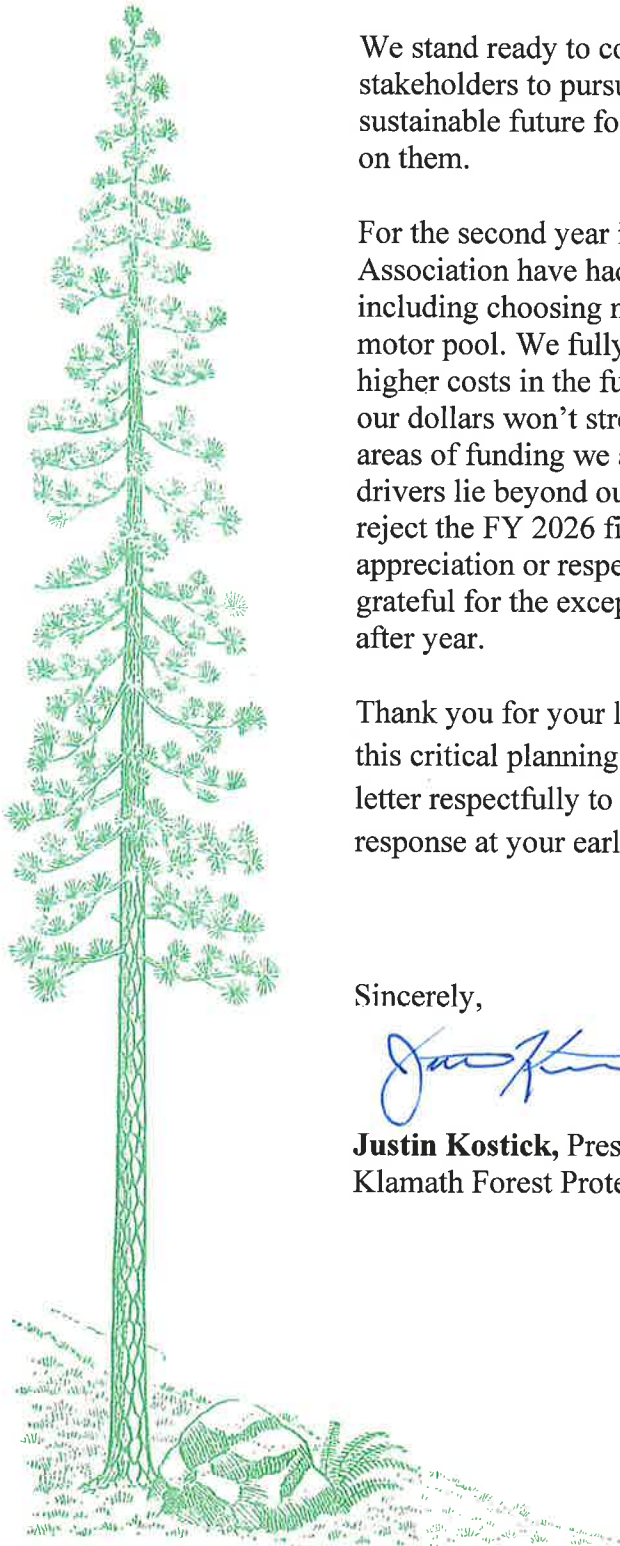
For the second year in a row, the Klamath-Lake District and the Protective Association have had to make difficult decisions for this budget cycle, including choosing not to fund essential maintenance projects and our motor pool. We fully recognize that postponing maintenance will lead to higher costs in the future, and that delaying motor pool investments means our dollars won't stretch as far later on. These though, are among the few areas of funding we actually have control over, as most major budget drivers lie beyond our influence. To be absolutely clear, our decision to reject the FY 2026 fire protection budget in no way reflects a lack of appreciation or respect. On the contrary, we deeply value and are sincerely grateful for the exceptional work the Klamath-Lake District delivers year after year.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our perspective during this critical planning period. The KFPA Board of Directors submits this letter respectfully to you and the Board of Forestry. We request a written response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Justin Kostick, President
Klamath Forest Protection Association



Klamath Forest Protective Association

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON

ORGANIZED TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVE FOREST PROTECTION

May 23, 2025

Kate Skinner

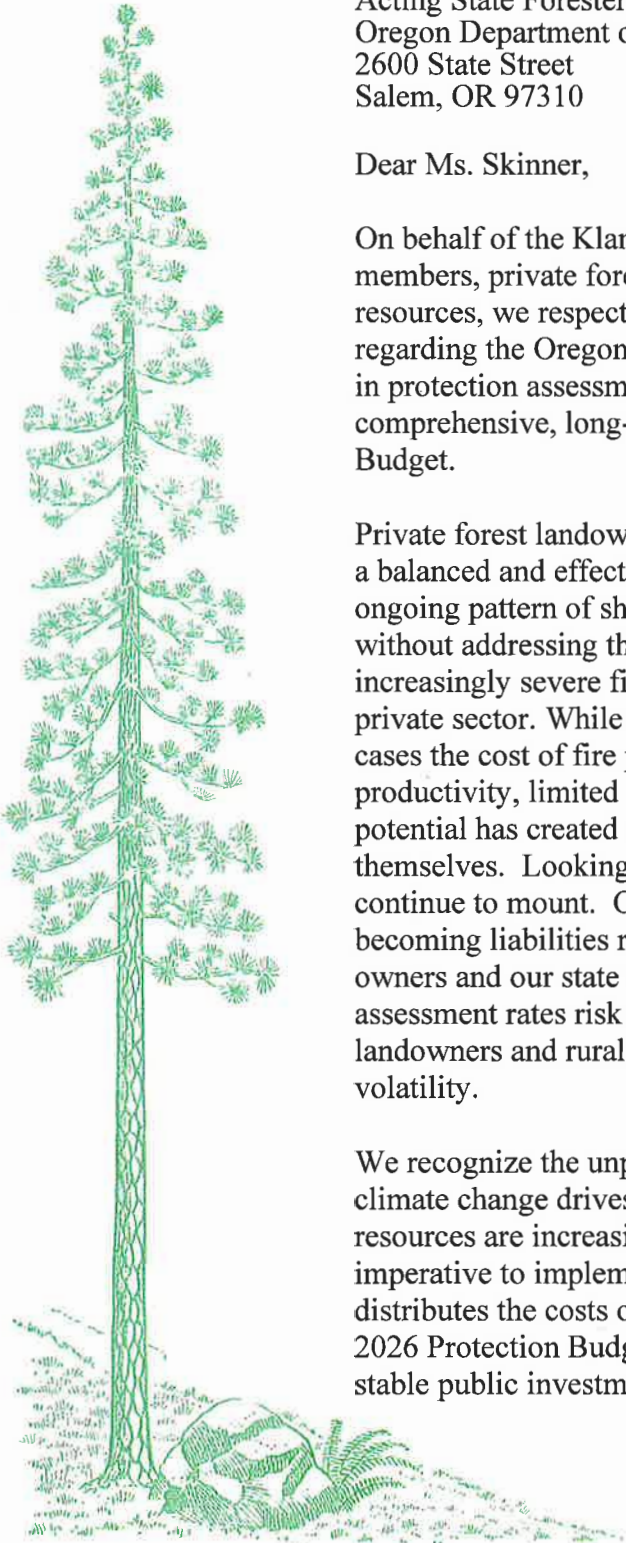
Acting State Forester
Oregon Department of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Ms. Skinner,

On behalf of the Klamath Forest Protection Association (KFPA) and our members, private forest landowners and stewards of Oregon's natural resources, we respectfully submit this letter to express our deep concern regarding the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) proposed increases in protection assessment rates and to underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive, long-term fire funding solution in the 2026 Protection Budget.

Private forest landowners have long partnered with the State in supporting a balanced and effective wildland fire protection system. However, the ongoing pattern of shifting fire suppression costs toward landowners without addressing the systemic fiscal imbalance exacerbated by increasingly severe fire seasons has placed an unsustainable burden on the private sector. While every landowner's situation is different, in most cases the cost of fire protection especially on the eastside with low productivity, limited logging and milling infrastructure, and high wildfire potential has created conditions where the acres may not pay for themselves. Looking ahead, this trajectory becomes worse as costs continue to mount. Our timberland and grazing assets are quickly becoming liabilities rather than the assets they could and should be for the owners and our state as a whole. The recent proposals to raise protection assessment rates risk further eroding that partnership, especially for small landowners and rural communities already grappling with economic volatility.

We recognize the unprecedented challenges ODF faces, particularly as climate change drives longer, more destructive fire seasons and state resources are increasingly strained. However, this makes it all the more imperative to implement a durable funding framework that equitably distributes the costs of wildfire readiness, suppression, and resilience. The 2026 Protection Budget must reflect a holistic strategy, one that secures stable public investment, leverages federal partnerships, and reaffirms the



Klamath Forest Protective Association

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON

ORGANIZED TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVE FOREST PROTECTION

shared responsibility model that has guided Oregon's fire protection system for decades.

We stand ready to collaborate with the Department, lawmakers, and fellow stakeholders to pursue a solution that ensures a resilient, fair, and sustainable future for Oregon's forests and the communities that depend on them.

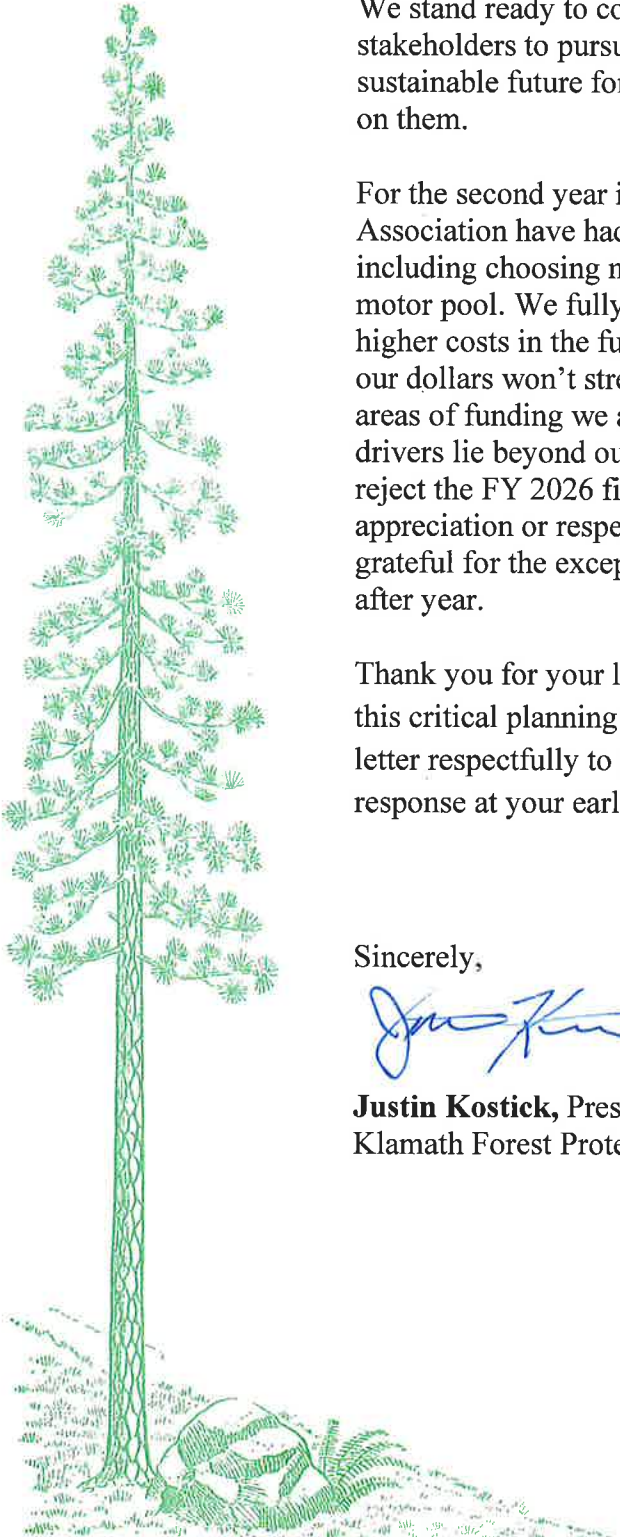
For the second year in a row, the Klamath-Lake District and the Protective Association have had to make difficult decisions for this budget cycle, including choosing not to fund essential maintenance projects and our motor pool. We fully recognize that postponing maintenance will lead to higher costs in the future, and that delaying motor pool investments means our dollars won't stretch as far later on. These though, are among the few areas of funding we actually have control over, as most major budget drivers lie beyond our influence. To be absolutely clear, our decision to reject the FY 2026 fire protection budget in no way reflects a lack of appreciation or respect. On the contrary, we deeply value and are sincerely grateful for the exceptional work the Klamath-Lake District delivers year after year.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our perspective during this critical planning period. The KFPA Board of Directors submits this letter respectfully to you and the Board of Forestry. We request a written response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Justin Kostick, President
Klamath Forest Protection Association



ROGUE FOREST PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

5286 Table Rock Road Central Point OR, 97502
(541) 664-3328 FAX (541) 664-4340

Officers:

President:
Darin McMichael

Vice President:
Brian Bradac

Sec.-Treas.:
Mike Meredith

Directors:
Mike Backen
Ed Fallon
Mikaela Gosney
Todd Marthoski
Darin McMichael
Jeremy Kennedy
Justin Kostick
Whitney Henneman
Mike Meredith
Brian Bradac
Tom Young

Advisory Directors:
Kristin Babbs
Mike McCann
Dave Larson
Jeremy Delack
Chad Washington

District Forester
Dan Quinones

Members:
Bureau of Land Mgt.
Chinook Forest Mgt.
FWS Forestry
Green Diamond
Manulife Investment Mgt.
Josephine Co. Forestry
Lone Rock Timber Co.
Miller Ranch
Murphy Timber Invest.
Silver Butte Timber Co.
Siskiyou Cascade Group
Snowy Butte Timberlands
Stanley Ranch

Members of:
Keep Oregon Green
OFIC Protection
Committee

May 13th, 2025

Chair Kelly and Members of the Oregon State Board of Forestry
Oregon Department of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

The Rogue Forest Protective Association (RFPA) would like to inform you of our concerns regarding the 2026 Protection Budget for the Oregon Department of Forestry Southwest Oregon District, serving primarily Jackson and Josephine counties. Once again, the landowners in Southwest Oregon are facing the challenge of the steadily increasing cost of wildland firefighting and daily business in this extremely fire-prone district. We have hoped for some relief to come from legislative efforts at the State level.

The Southwest Oregon District's fiscal year 2026 budget comes out to \$14,320,811. This is an increase of \$2,050,681 (+16.7%) over FY 2025. The increases to the District's budget out pace those of neighboring districts in Southern Oregon and historically the fiscal budget has not generated enough revenue to keep up with the cost of providing an adequate level of protection, and with this process complete, it's another example of the inadequacies of this funding structure.

Overall, costs are increasing across the board; Services & Supplies and Transfers increased by \$784,354 (+18.47%), Motor Pool increased by \$376,607 (+37%), RSU/Telecommunications increased by \$124,391 (+28%) and Salem Fire Management costs increased \$365,042 (+40%). These additional costs bring no additional capacity and the District has made no changes to our level of protection in Southwest Oregon.

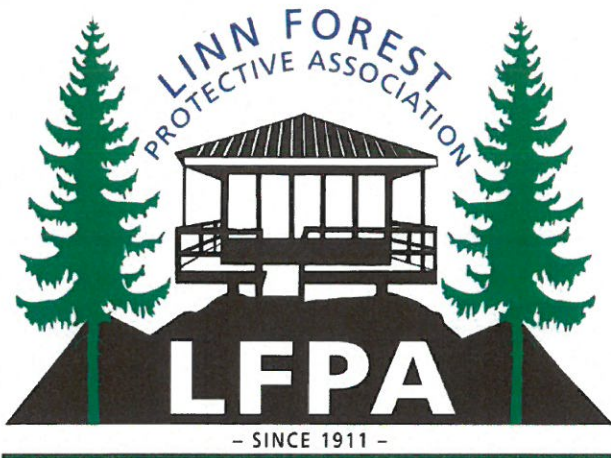
The RFPA Board of Directors all stand in agreement that rising costs of wildland firefighting is an issue that needs to be addressed immediately by the Department of Forestry and its Board. The dramatic changes in wildfire over the last decade and the costs to provide an adequate level of protection on this District cannot be carried by landowners if rates continue to increase at these rates; a change in fire funding is needed. Wildfire affects all Oregonians, and we believe a long-term, equitable funding fix is becoming overdue. The RFPA Board approved the 2026 Budget 7 votes for and 4 against. We want to emphasize that all members support the tireless work this District does to protect its communities and our valuable resources. Members voting No could no longer support the current wildfire funding system where costs continue to increase uncontrollably with no end in sight.

The RFPA Board of Directors submits this letter respectfully to you and the Board of Forestry. We do request a written response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Darin McMichael, President
Rogue Forest Protective Association



4690 Highway 20
Sweet Home, Oregon 97386
541-367-6108

President:

Caleb Brown
Frank Timber Resources, Inc.

Vice President:

Bruce Gibeau
Giustina Resources, Giustina
Woodlands & Lost Creek Timber

Treasurer/Secretary:

Stacey Whaley
Linn County Parks

Directors:

Aubrey Brandis
Campbell Global
Franklin Clarkson Timber

Milt Moran
Cascade Timber Consulting, Inc

Lauren Parks
Fun Forest LLC

Cary Hart
Giustina Land & Timber Co.

Scott Melcher
Shadow Lane Timberlands

McKenzie Bredemeyer
Sierra Pacific Industries

Christy Tye
Small Woodlands

Randy Hereford
Starker Forests, Inc.

Richard Wolfenbarger
Weyerhaeuser Company

Advisory Directors:
ODF Area Director (SOA):

Bureau of Land Mgt:

US Forest Service:

Army Corp of Engineers:

Oregon Forest
Industries Council:

Keep Oregon Green Association:

ODF:
District Forester:
Chris Cline

5/29/2025

Chair Kelly and Members of the Oregon State Board of Forestry
Interim State Forester Kate Skinner
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

Linn Forest Protective Association (LFPA) has been representing landowners within Linn County since 1911. We have been working hand in hand with South Cascade District staff to develop an adequate level of protection and maintain Oregon's complete and coordinated firefighting system. The private/public partnership between Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and local landowners is vital to this systems success over the years.

LFPA is in full support of effective wildfire protection. However, the current funding structure is increasingly unsustainable and inequitable. HB 3940 presents a balanced and long-overdue reform that provides meaningful relief while maintaining Oregon's commitment to a complete and coordinated firefighting system. HB 3940 will bring a more simplified and fair approach to wildfire funding. It will involve all Oregonians, not just landowners inside protection district boundaries.

Some highlights of what HB 3940 will do:

- Redirecting landowner funds to local protection districts, assuring funding for fire suppression where we live and operate.
- Removing landowner responsibility for the cost of large conflagrations, which are increasingly sparked on federal lands.
- Eliminating ODF administrative cost burdens from landowner bills.

Crucially, HB 3940 also acknowledges that large wildfire costs are not solely the responsibility of forestland owners. The bill encourages the identification of broader, more sustainable revenue sources that treat wildfire response as a statewide obligation. LFPA members believe this all-Oregonians approach is critical as wildfire risk becomes increasingly widespread and complex. We encourage you to support HB 3940, a more inclusive wildfire funding structure for all Oregonians.

Respectively,

Caleb Brown
Linn Forest Protective Association - President

Clackamas-Marion Forest Protective Association

39486 S Cooper Rd
Molalla, Or 97038
roger@rwbeyer.com
503-519-5285

May 29, 2025

Kate Skinner

Interim State Forester
Oregon Department of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

Dear State Forester Skinner,

I am writing to express our concern regarding the increasing financial burden placed on forestland owners for wildfire protection. While our board approved the proposed district budget this year, it was not without many questions and concerns. As forestland owners, we fully support effective wildfire protection. However, the current funding structure is increasingly unsustainable and, without structural changes to how we fund wildfire protection, it will continue to become more inequitable.

Oregon needs comprehensive changes to how our wildfire fighting system is funded and at this time we see HB 3940 as the only viable alternative on the table. It presents a balanced and long-overdue reform that provides meaningful relief while maintaining Oregon's commitment to wildfire preparedness and response. As a member of the task force that worked on this issue for the past year, I know how difficult this issue is to solve. I urge your office to support the passage of HB 3940 and help advocate for a wildfire funding system that is fair, modernized, and sustainable for all Oregonians.

In addition to the annual district budget and what is happening in the legislature, I would like to bring up a few other issues that our association is concerned with.

First, I would like to thank the department for including the funding for a new office complex in Mehama. As we approach the five-year anniversary of the office burning, our board has concerns of both the pace of the rebuild and the cost. I know the district staff has been doing what they can to reduce the cost of the project, but the potential of having district rates increasing for annual costs plus funding the cost of a new building complex, above the insurance payment, has many of us very concerned. Additionally, the cost increase due to the delays and the cost of renting alternative space has some of us wondering if there will be any insurance money left to pay for the rebuild.

Next, we would like to highlight the issue of staffing for the department, the northwest area and our district. I know you are aware that the northwest area, including our district, will have four

interim district foresters this year during fire season. While each of these interim foresters are qualified to do the job, having 80% of the area forests under interim leadership is concerning.

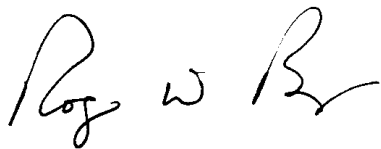
We also cannot help wondering what this means for the overall state ability to respond to large fires, should they occur. We know that at times in the past years the department has had difficulty filling incident command teams, and I know our landowners will be very hesitant to have our interim district forester leave the district this year during times of high fire danger. I would assume landowners in other districts with interim district foresters may feel the same.

We also recognize the staffing issue is not an ODF problem alone. At our annual meeting we heard from federal and local agencies that they too are having difficulty maintain full staffing levels. I wish I could say we have a solution for the problem, but at this time we just wanted to bring the problem to your attention and hopefully we will collectively find a way to address the issue soon.

Finally, the issue of public (non ODF paying) caused fires continues to be a large problem, especially for our districts near the metro area. Debris burning, motorists and recreation fires continue to increase despite the efforts of Keep Oregon Green and others who are working to spread the message of fire safety. We encourage your staff to continue to work for solutions on this problem as what we have been doing doesn't seem to be achieving the desired goals.

In closing I would like to thank you for your leadership and for your ongoing commitment to our state's forests and rural communities. I also ask that you continue to work toward an all-Oregonians approach to solving and funding our wildfire problem. This is critical as wildfire risk becomes increasingly widespread and complex.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger W. Beyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" being the most prominent.

Roger Beyer
President, Clackamas-Marion FPA



EASTERN LANE FOREST PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

3150 MAIN STREET
SPRINGFIELD, OR 97478

(Incorporated)

President:

Ted Reiss

Giustina Land & Timber Co.

Vice President:

Kenny Rose

Giustina Resources

Secretary:

Mark Willhite

Sierra Pacific Industries

Treasurer:

Dylan Johnson

Weyerhaeuser Company

Directors:

Susan Fricke

Eugene Water & Electric Board

Will Hansen

RDK Land & Timber, LLC

Shane Uffelman

Franklin Clarkson

Advisory Directors:

ODF Area Manager:

Dave Larson

ODF District Forester:

Chris Cline

ODF Unit Forester:

John Flannigan

*NW Oregon Interagency
Fire Management:*

Eric Risdal

Or. Forest & Ind. Council:

Chad Washington

Keep Oregon Green Assn:

Kristin Babbs

Army Corp. of Engineers:

Christie Johnson

May 28, 2025

Kate Skinner

Interim State Forester

Oregon Department of Forestry

2600 State Street

Salem, OR 97310

Dear State Forester Skinner,

I am writing to express concern regarding the increasing financial burden placed on forestland owners for wildfire protection and to encourage your support for the passage of **House Bill 3940** during the upcoming legislative session.

At the South Cascade District of ODF the annual gross cost of providing an adequate level of protection has increased 27% in three years. These costs are in addition to the significant contributions large and small landowners make in preparation for fire season by maintaining access, improving water availability, conducting fire training, and maintaining firefighting tools such as dozers, engines, tenders, communication and personal gear.

I stand by the following statement I made in a letter to Cal Mukumoto last year (*attached for reference*):

"In brief, the members of ELFPA believe the time has come to renovate the complicated funding model in place to provide for fire prevention and protection. A new funding and operations model must be centered NOT ONLY on providing service to all residents of the State of Oregon. A new funding model must be centered on securing funding from all recipients of the excellent prevention and protection efforts rendered each year by the Oregon Department of Forestry and all partners who engage in these exceptionally important endeavors."

HB 3940 is the best option to modernize the wildfire funding model that includes modest increases in costs for landowners, a shift in funding from the forest products harvest tax, and garnering support from previously untapped sources of revenue. Recent fire seasons have required extraordinary efforts from ODF and landowners. Changes to the funding model are required to meet the challenge.

Thank you kindly for your efforts on our behalf.

Ted Reiss - President

Transcript

May 1, 2025, 8:00PM

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 0:04

Yeah, she was just doing it when you're ready.

All right. Good afternoon.

My name is Rob Penzer and I serve as the Oregon Department of Forestry District Forester for the Central Oregon district.

Today I'll be serving as the hearing Officer receiving comments on behalf of the Oregon Department of Forestry on.

FY26 Physical year budget for the Central Oregon District.

The hearing is designed to listen and record any comments from the public and not to answer additional questions at this time.

The public hearing will be recorded and I will present a report to the department at the conclusion of the public hearings scheduled today.

Each person will be allowed a maximum of three minutes to provide testimony.

The hearing will conclude at 2:00.

This hearing is now in session as being recorded to maintain a permanent record.

Today's Wednesday, May 1st.

1st and the time is 1:01.

As hearing Officer, I will provide a report to the department containing responses recorded during this public hearing. The department will then forward the oral and written testimonies during the public comment period onto the Board of Forestry.

This hearing today is only the opportunity to provide oral testimony written.

Testimony will be accepted by e-mail.

Haley Hughes.

Haley Hughes at ODF.

Oregon Gov.

And we can provide that e-mail to see if you if you need it.

Through 50 clock PM May 7th, 2024 written testimony will also be accepted via mail address to the state Forester PO Box 546, John Day, Oregon 97846.

Mail must be postmarked at 5:00 PM May 9th, 2024.

Comments received or postmarked after that time will not be reviewed or considered by the department unless the department decides to extend the public comment

period for everyone.

If you would like to provide comment at this time, please let us know by raising your hand or by turning on your camera.

I will begin taking comments now. When your name is called, please unmute your device and turn your camera on. If you are able, state your name address for the record. If you represent an organization, please state the organization's name.

You may then present your comments once finished, Please remember your device and turn off your camera.

Rick Fletcher will be assisting me when calling for comments.

Rick, do we have anyone wishing to provide comments?

Go to Kristen.

Do you have anybody wishing to provide comment in the Dow?

DO **DODD Kristin * ODF** 2:26

No, no oral testimony from the Dallas unit right now.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 2:31

And received written testimony from one night and represented in that unit.

DO **DODD Kristin * ODF** 2:37

Correct.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 2:39

OK. Going to John day. Dustin, do you have anybody there that would like to provide testimony?

GO **GUSTAVESON Dustin * ODF** 2:45

We do not have anybody in John Day.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 2:48

I didn't see no others online.

We'll move here to Prineville.

We'll start, Roy, if you're willing.

All right, let's put this in. Just oral. Correct and you can submit written words.

It is all when I'm done I can submit it. I don't have to e-mail it to Haley.

I'll hand it to her, alright?

My name is Roy Beyer. My wife and I own Wind Down Ranch LLC at 6500 NE Makai Creek Rd. Prineville, OR.

Yes, our ranch consists of a little over 2000 acres of either forest or grazing classified acres for the state of Oregon. ODF Fire patrol assessment.

We've managed these forested acres by Denning and junior for cutting to reduce the wildfire potential hazard. Wildfire hazard potential.

We also have a herd of cows and cattle and graze the property property to reduce the grasses and find fire fuel levels.

For a number of years, the assessment rates were relatively stable with some slight increases and decreases due to the previous year fire activity, which affected the local district budgets. With the passage of Senate Bill 762, the additional staffing hires and budget transfers to the Salem O.

Office required by this legislation has resulted in a cumulative of annual budget and assessment rate increases.

By the cod of 58%.

And over the last three years.

For the fiscal year 2026 ODF district budgets without passage of a new fire funding bill, there is no increase in proposed state general fund monies to cover these extra budget dollars.

These increases are being passed to the private land owners in Central and Eastern Oregon to fund those seventh Senate Bill 762 required expenses and extra firefighting costs.

This is not fair and acceptable to the local land owners.

Private 4th liners like myself cannot afford to 58% increase in fire patrol costs that the legislature and the Oregon Department of Forestry have proposed for the 2026 budget year.

Our private forests in Central Oregon have almost no monetary stumpage value due to low delivered log prices for ponderosa pine and the high transportation costs because of no local log processing. Mills in Central Oregon.

The benefits that come from keeping these forests green come as carbon sequestration, Fish and Wildlife habit, clean air and water aesthetics, and keeping working lands working and not in new home subdivisions.

These are basically public values and benefit all word onions.

The Oregon Department of Forestry Fire. Am I on the clock? You're good.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, Firefighting and Protection Division required funding should be continued to be funded by all Oregonians and the Oregon State Legislature needs to identify a new and equitable way to provide the funding resources to protect these public values. If they do not, then private fore.

Ownership in Central Oregon will be reduced to small acres and a lot more new homes in the forested areas.

Yes.

As a budget Committee member of the Central Oregon District of ODF and a dues paying member of the East Oregon Forest Protection Association, I voted no twice to the approval of the Central Oregon District Fire Protection Fiscal Year 2026 budget. The increasing fire funding budgets are an Oregon problem that is being passed on to the forest and grazing land owners and all Oregon funding solution needs to be proposed and passed.

To cover this Oregon problem, thank you for your time and consideration, Roy Butter.

You need a copy of this ayeck.

Ross, I do see you online.

I am gonna go to the 1st and then I'll make sure that you get the ability to provide testimony as well, so.

R **ross** 6:55

Sure thing.

Thank you.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 6:58

Good afternoon.

I'm John breeze.

My wife and Lynn and I ranch out of prime going, Kirk County.

I'm a member of the East Oregon Forest Protective Association.

We recognize that the unit district foresters have a strong ethic and protection of our timber and range.

They are dedicated and strive to do their best for the public.

They serve as good stewards of the grazing and timber.

We also recognize the need to pay our fair share of the cost to protect our private land.

In East Oregon for Protection association and I'm a representative, our assessment costs per acre going up in Eastern Oregon districts. The ability of these lands to pay for themselves continue to diminish in light of loss of local mills, inflation, increasing business taxes, cost of goods, transportation and many.

Other factors that make keeping.

Forest lands as forest lands.

A losing proposition.

Cook County, as is central and Eastern Oregon, may be coming out of drought, but many ranchers like us may still have reduced cattle numbers.

But the grazing assessment goes up regardless of income stream.

Timber management is even worse on our 200 thousand 2000 plus acre timber.

Ground trees are still dying from heat and moisture stress. Even if we can get a mill delivery purchase order logging costs.

Are higher than mills are willing to pay for Pond Rosa Pond?

They have almost no management options yet we face a deeper increasing timber assessment. This is not sustainable for us as a ranch family. For the last 10 years.

Our forest Daniel Basil area growth per acre has been less than increased annual per acre.

Odf fire assessment rate.

This is before the SB672 offset.

Could have been added at to our assessment.

Many Central Oregon and Eastern Oregon.

Small woodland forest owners occupy lower class timber ground and therefore don't have the potential to go productive timber to compensate the steady increase of the assessment rate. The assessment rate is going up faster than we can grow trees.

We have got to where it is no longer profitable to produce timber on these lands in Central and Eastern Oregon. If we can't raise forest land sustainably.

Under these current conditions, how can the state expect there to be forest land for future generations?

The Forest protective districts recognize and support a need for increased fire capacity statewide. That was predicated on the idea that land owners would wouldn't be asked to show that the extra financial burden ODF district budgets were not approved by local forest protective associations.

This will be almost unprecedented that all associations E the cascade or disapprove the proposed district budget.

In the legislature this year, several proposals to increase funding to offset fire funding. Most of these proposals are short term fixes and not tied to inflation. Even if funding is provided by one more proposed measures in a very few years, we will be back to the same problem.

Of underfunding ODF fire budgets.

We need a different approach to fire the wildfire threat timber and rangeland and central and Eastern Oregon must have the infrastructure incentive to actually manage our range, lands and forests to mitigate exposure to large and uncontrolled fire.

There is not enough government grant money to merely treat private grass range lands in thin forest in order to stop large fires.

Set the ODF district level.

We need a better way for land owners to manage their property.

We need mills, biomass plants and tax incentives to implement practices that work to stop these large extinction fires.

We need the state of Oregon to bring pressure on the Federal Forest Service to get serious about sustainable forest practices.

Pressure has to be applied for yearly allowable harvest on each.

Forest and Central and Eastern Oregon. That is the only way that investment mill infrastructure can happen in this region of the state.

We ask with the continued recognition that wildfire is a statewide problem addressed by a statewide collision, respectively. John and Lynn Breeze, Dixie Meadow Company, 3315 SE Poland highway, prideville.

Thank you, Joan.

I'll take it.

Roy will will move to you there.

Ross. Oh, sorry, my apologies.

I saw that little action.

R **ross** 12:16
Lloyd, huh?

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 12:17
Sorry, sorry, Ross.

R **ross** 12:21

OK.

Well, that was very you guys had had it very well prepared there.

I'm probably not as well prepared as but you. But you know my opinion.

And so I just go on and you know.

What? What? I guess what needs to go back before the state is our our rates have climbed a large percentage over the last three years and years before that. I think I I mentioned that before in a letter.

These costs that are passed to the private land owners need to be shared statewide in some in some fashion.

The land owners pay their fair share.

I I think that the land owners, by paying their fair share have a little bit of skin in the game, but that skin in the game is getting to be too much with the dollar 58 grazing and 368. If I got it right, Rob.

You know, you spread that amount over large acres, even small acres, but large acres, it adds up faster.

And as John had spoke about, you know it's driving.

It's driving these families out who make their living on this land.

These prices don't sustain in any way possible with an east side timber market.

There's no economic value for a majority of these trees that we have out here.

Which state law requires that we protect?

Umm.

You know, just because of our geographic location, there's no mills.

It's high freight cost and if we were to find a timber market of some kind, there wouldn't be much left over by the time we got done paying our taxes.

And with that being said, after last year's large fires, you know, we burned up half of our timber timber that it was hard enough to pay the the rate to protect. And there was actually something there that we were wanting to protect.

Now that that's.

Now that that's dead, it's.

You know, it's got absolutely no market value at this point.

And of course, the state law requires that we fight nuisance fires.

But it's been my experience and and kind of my opinion now when I look around a lot of that ground that's burnt, whether we're paying a timber rate or whatever rate we're paying at this stage of the game, what's it gonna hurt to let those things burn?

They all burned up last year, so it's really hard to pay attax especially high tax.

On.

On ground that's hardly worth protecting at this point.

So with that being said, I you know, I I understand that that probably is the dollar amount which we need in order to conduct business as we've planned to do with this coming year.

However, it's not sustainable and private land owners and family farms can't stomach all this burden.

Thank you.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 15:22

OK.

Thank you, Ross. We appreciate that.

Seeing nobody else here in Prineville all ask the Dallas one more time.

Is anybody arrived for providing comment?

DO **DODD Kristin * ODF** 15:35

Further comment from the Dallas.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 15:39

And moving again to John Day there with Dustin.

GO **GUSTAVESON Dustin * ODF** 15:44

Yeah, there's nobody in John Day.

RO **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** 15:48

All right.

Well, thank you everybody for coming today.

Appreciate you following through and allowing us the opportunity to provide this comment to the Board of forestry.

It's all part of the process for sure.

The next steps.

Or if you would like to appeal to the Board of forestry and that you have a 30 day window to do that from from today, next 30 days to do that, it will allow you the opportunity to speak in front of the Board of forestry potentially depends on.

How many people actually appeal but just wanna throw that back out there to you

for information. And if you need any help or have any more questions, I'm here. Rick's here. Kristen. Dustin. We can all help you get that taken care of if you have questions.

Thanks.

But with no further people here, we'll consider this budget hearing adjourned.

At 1:17.

● **RICTOR Dauna * ODF** stopped transcription

April 30, 2025

**RE: Oregon Department of Forestry, Central Oregon District- Fiscal 2026
Proposed Budget**

**To: Rob Pentzer, District Forester, Chair Kelly and Members of the Oregon Board
of Forestry**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these written comments to be submitted to the May 1, 2025 Central Oregon District (COD)- FY 2026 Budget Hearing.

My wife and I own land (a mix of Timber and Grazing Assessments), near Dufur, Oregon, protected by Central Oregon District-ODF.

For the third year in a row the COD Budget Rate Per Acre is dramatically up. Ironically these rate increases are not a result of increased levels of protection but rather due to continued lack of General Fund support for SB-762 and even more frustrating for FY-2026, over expenditures and fiscal mismanagement at the Salem ODF Statewide Services Level.

The COD Rate went up 34% for Timber Acres and 87% for Grazing Acres for FY 2024, an additional 34% for Timber and 105% for Grazing for FY 2025, and the current proposed FY-2026 Rates amount to an additional 29% increase for Timber Acres and an additional 15% increase for Grazing Acres. To say this is unacceptable is an understatement!

The proposed COD FY-2026 Budget includes a 400,000 dollar "pass down" to COD for Salem Fire Management due to previous budget over expenditures, miscoding, and fiscal mismanagement at the Salem level. Obviously, this is unacceptable as well, when you consider the 400,000 dollars is only the COD "share" with ODF- Salem's deficits to be shared with all Districts proportionally.

What this really means is Landowners, across Oregon are forced to bail out ODF-Salem by means of additions to the local fire protection rates.

\$400,000 dollars would be very helpful in adding and maintaining local "Boots on the Ground" for fire suppression versus covering fiscal mismanagement.

In closing, it has been stated many times in many circles that a revamping of ODF wildland fire funding and Oregon's overall funding of wildland fire protection is needed for the future. No other state in the country places such a financial burden on forest landowners, particularly non-industrial landowners such as us. We need to pay our fair share of the direct services provided but not continue to suffer from the lack of General Fund support fallout created by SB-762 and Salem-ODF budgetary blunders.

ODF-Central Oregon District is critical should a wildland fire start on/or near our ranch and we appreciate and support their local efforts, but like so many other landowners we cannot pencil out or support the Proposed FY-2026 COD Budget. Landowners should not be required to bear the financial burdens incurred due to a lack of legislative action and fiscal mismanagement at the ODF-Salem level.

Thanks for considering this input and I look forward to your resolution of this issue.



Bill Hunt

Bella Valley Ranch
80560 S. Valley Rd.
Dufur, Oregon, 97021

1 May 2025

To: Oregon Department of Forestry

RE: Board of Forestry Testimony in response to Central Oregon District Department of Forestry Budget.

I am John Breese; my wife Lynne and I ranch out of Prineville in Crook County. I am a member of the East Oregon Forest Protection Association. We recognize that the Unit and District foresters have a strong ethic to protect our timber and range. They are dedicated and strive to do their best for the public they serve. As good stewards of grazing and timber, we also recognize the need to pay our fair share of the costs to protect our private lands. In the East Oregon Forest Protective Association that I am a representative, our assessment costs per acre are going up in the East Oregon districts. The ability of these lands to pay for themselves continues to diminish in light of loss of local mills, inflation, increasing business taxes, cost of goods, transportation, and many other factors that make keeping forestlands as forestlands a losing proposition.

Crook County, as is Central and Eastern Oregon, coming out of drought. But many ranchers like us, may still have reduced cattle numbers, but the grazing assessment goes up regardless of income streams. Timber management is even worse. On our 2000+-acre timbered ground, trees are still dying from heat and moisture stress. Even if we can get a mill delivery purchase order, logging costs are higher than mills are willing to pay for Ponderosa Pine or Douglas fir. We have almost no management options. Yet we are faced with ever increasing timber assessment. This is not sustainable for us as a family ranch. For the last ten years our forest's annual basal area growth per acre has been less than the increased annual per acre ODF fire assessment rate. This is before the SB 672 offset may be added to our assessment. Many Central and Eastern Oregon small woodland forests owners occupy lower class timber ground, and therefore don't have the potential to grow productive timber to compensate the steady increase in assessment rate. The assessment rate is going up faster than we can grow trees. We have gotten to where it is no longer profitable to produce timber on these lands in Central and Eastern Oregon. If we can't raise forest land sustainably under these current conditions, how can the state expect there to be forestland for future generations?


Forest Protective districts recognize and support a need for increased fire capacity statewide. That was predicated on the idea that landowners wouldn't be asked to shoulder the extra financial burden. The ODF district budgets were not approved by local forest protective associations. This will be almost unprecedented that all associations East of the Cascades will disapprove the proposed district budgets.

In the legislature this year are several proposals to increase funding to offset fire funding. Most of these proposals are short term fixes and not tied to inflation. Even if funding is provided by one or more proposed measures, in a very few years we will be back to the same problem of underfunding ODF fire budgets.

We need a different approach to wildfire threat. Timber and rangeland in Central & Eastern Oregon must have the infrastructure and incentive to actually manage our rangelands and forests to mitigate exposure to large uncontrolled fire. There is not enough government grant money to merely treat private rangelands and thin forests in order to stop large fires at the ODF District level. We need a better way for landowners to manage their property. We need mills, biomass plants and tax incentives to implement practices that work to stop these large expensive fires. We need the State of Oregon to bring pressure on the Federal Forest Service to get serious about sustainable forest practices. Pressure has to be applied for a yearly allowable harvest from each forest in Central & Eastern Oregon. That is the only way that investment in mill infrastructure can happen in this region of the state.

We ask for the continued recognition that wildfire is a statewide problem, addressed by a statewide solution.

Respectively,



John & Lynne Breese
Dixie Meadow Company
3315 SE Paulina Hwy.
Prineville, OR 97754

Roy M. Beyer
Wine Down Ranch, LLC
6500 NE McKay Creek Rd
Prineville, Oregon 97754

May 1, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Roy Beyer and my wife and I own Wine Down Ranch north of Prineville in Crook County. I have been a member of the Central Oregon District, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) budget committee for 10 years. The ranch has 2000 acres of either forest or grazing classified acres for the state of Oregon (ODF) fire patrol assessment. We have managed the forested acres by thinning and juniper cutting to reduce the wildfire hazard potential. We also have a herd of cattle and graze the property to reduce the grasses and fine fire fuel levels.

For a number of years, the assessment rates were relatively stable with some slight increases and decreases due to the previous fire year activity which affected the local district budgets. With the passage of SB762, the additional staffing hires and budget transfers to the Salem ODF office required by this legislation has resulted in a cumulative of annual budget and assessment rate increases by the COD of 58% over the last 3 years. For the FY 2026 ODF district budgets, without passage of a new fire funding bill(HB 3940), there is no increase in proposed state general fund monies to cover these extra budget dollars. These increases are being passed to the private landowners in central and eastern Oregon to fund these SB762 required expenses and extra fire fighting costs. This is not fair and acceptable to the local landowners.

Private forest landowners like myself cannot afford the 58% increase in fire patrol costs that the legislature and the Oregon Department of Forestry have proposed for the 2026 budget year. Our private forests in central Oregon have almost no monetary stumpage value due to low delivered log prices for ponderosa pine and the high transportation costs because of no local log processing mills in central Oregon. The benefits that come from keeping these forests "green" come as carbon sequestration, fish and wildlife habitat, clean air and water, aesthetics and keeping working lands working and not in new home sub-divisions. These are basically public values and benefit all Oregonians.

The Oregon Department of Forestry fire fighting and protection division required funding should be continued to be funded by all Oregonians and the Oregon State legislature needs to identify a new and equitable way to provide the funding resources to protect these public values. If they do not, then private forest ownership in central Oregon will be reduced to small acres and a lot more new homes in the forested areas.

As a budget committee member of the Central Oregon District of ODF and a dues paying member of the East Oregon Forest Protection Association, I voted "no" twice to the approval of the "Central Oregon District Fire Protection Fiscal Year 2026 Budget". The increasing fire funding budgets are an Oregon problem that is being passed onto the forest and grazing landowners. An all Oregon funding solution needs to be proposed and passed to cover this Oregon problem.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



MINUTES OF PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

Covering Period

July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

Protection Unit Northeast Oregon District, in accordance with ORS 477.255, the Public Budget Meeting for the above named fire district was held on April 11th, 2025 at 10:00 AM. Northeast Oregon District Office conference room.

Justin Lauer acted as Chairperson, and Kay Rinker acted as Secretary.

The following persons attended:

No one attended the hearing.

The Chairperson called the hearing to order at 10:00am with an explanation of the purpose of the hearing.

The Chairperson invited any comments or discussion relative to the budget or protection matters from those present.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm


Secretary

Roy M. Beyer

Wine Down Ranch, LLC

6500 NE McKay Creek Rd

Prineville, Oregon 97754

May 29, 2025

To The State Forester of Oregon:

My name is Roy Beyer and my wife and I own Wine Down Ranch north of Prineville in Crook County. It is a member of the East Oregon Forest Protection Association, and I have been a member of the Central Oregon District, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) budget committee for 10 years. The ranch has 2000 acres of either forest or grazing classified acres for the state of Oregon (ODF) fire patrol assessment. We have managed the forested acres by thinning and juniper cutting to reduce the wildfire hazard potential. We also have a herd of cattle and graze the property to reduce the grasses and fine fire fuel levels.

This letter is to alert you that I am appealing the Oregon Department of Forestry, Central Oregon District budget for the 2026 budget year. For the years before budget year 2023, the assessment rates have been relatively stable with some slight increases and decreases based on the level of fire activity from the previous year. With the passage of "SB762", the additional staffing hires and budget transfers to the Salem ODF office has resulted in an increased annual budget requirement for the Central Oregon District of almost 2 million dollars. For the fiscal year 2023, "SB762" came with some general fund dollars to cover the extra expenses required by the act. For the FY 2026 budget year, there is no proposed state budget funding to cover these extra "SB762" budget dollars and the legislature has not provide an alternative funding mechanism to give the landowners a rate relief to cover these increases. This increase in funding is being passed to the private forest and grazing landowners. **This is not right and/ or equitable.**

Private forest landowners like myself cannot afford the increase in fire patrol costs that the legislature and the Oregon Department of Forestry have proposed for the 2026 budget year. Our private forests in central Oregon have almost no monetary stumpage value due to low delivered log prices for ponderosa pine and the high transportation costs because of no local log processing mills in central Oregon. The benefits that come from keeping these forests "green" come as carbon sequestration, fish and wildlife habitat, clean air and water, aesthetics and keeping working lands working and not in new home sub-divisions. These are basically public values and benefit all Oregonians.

I would propose that the Oregon State Board of Forestry should spend some time to promote the economical use of the east side forests of Oregon **instead** of putting more regulations in place that limit our chance to economically manage our east side forests. Maybe there are opportunities to enhance the biomass usage as credits toward the funding rates. Another suggestion is carbon credits or "CRP" monies that would go to help off-set the high timber and grazing rates in central and eastern Oregon.

The Oregon Department of Forestry fire fighting and protection division required funding should be continued to be funded by all Oregonians and the legislature needs to identify a new and equitable way to provide the funding resources to protect these public values. If they do not, then private forest

ownership in central Oregon will be reduced to small acres and a lot more new homes in the forested areas.

As a budget committee member of the Central Oregon District of ODF and a dues paying member of the East Oregon Forest Protection Association, I voted “no” twice to the approval of the “Central Oregon District Fire Protection Fiscal Year 2026 Budget”. The fire funding budgets are an Oregon problem that is being passed onto the forest and grazing landowners. An all Oregon funding solution needs to be proposed and passed to cover this Oregon problem.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Roy M. Beyer

The district then submits its protection budget to the State Forester for official approval by the Board of Forestry in June, as provided in ORS 477.265. The Board of Forestry does not have the authority to use or obligate funds beyond the authority granted through the biennial budgeting process by the Oregon Legislative Assembly.

Findings of Fact

The State Board of Forestry finds:

1. Roy Beyer is an owner of forestland within the Central Oregon District.
2. On May 1, 2025, the Central Oregon District conducted a public budget meeting in accordance with ORS 477.255.
3. On May 29, 2025, Mr. Beyer submitted a request, in writing, to appeal the recommended budget in accordance with ORS 477.260 and OAR 629-041-0035(1).
4. Mr. Beyer specifically stated the issues with the proposed Central Oregon District budget and the remedy sought.

Conclusions of Law

The State Board of Forestry is obligated to annually review the forest protection district budgets, make any changes in the budgets that are proper and consistent with law, and pass final approval on all district budgets and the prorated acreage rates therein, pursuant to ORS 477.265.

Ultimate Conclusion

The Board of Forestry affirms the Central Oregon District budget represents an adequate level of protection as required by ORS 477.265.

Appeal Rights

You have the right to seek judicial review of this Order by filing a petition in Circuit Court pursuant to ORS 183.484. To seek judicial review, you must file a petition with the Marion County Circuit Court, or the circuit court for the county in which you reside or have a principal business office, within 60 days from the day this Order was served on you. If this Order was personally delivered to you, the date of service is the day you received the Order. If this Order was mailed to you, the date of service is the day it was *mailed*, not the day you received it. The petition shall state the nature of your interests, the facts showing how you are adversely affected or aggrieved by the agency order and the ground or grounds upon which you contend the order should be reversed or remanded. If you do not file a petition for judicial review within the 60-day time period, you will lose your right to appeal.

Dated this 5th day of June, 2025,

Jim Kelly, Chair

Oregon Department of Forestry