



Senate Majority Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2023

Press Contact:

Tess Seger, Tess.Seger@oregonlegislature.gov

Senate Democrats Support Wildfire Victims

Measures will help keep disaster victims housed, support impacted communities

SALEM, Ore. - The Oregon Senate passed [House Bill 3215](#) and [House Bill 3059](#) to improve support and assistance for Oregonians impacted by wildfires and other disasters.

HB 3215 establishes the Disaster Housing Recovery Fund and allows Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to provide loans, grants, or other forms of assistance to repair, replace, rebuild, or address infrastructure needs for homes damaged or destroyed during a disaster, or support residents with assistance relating to housing or recovery associated with housing loss.

“We already do not have enough housing in our state while wildfires and extreme weather events that threaten Oregonians’ homes are becoming more common. This is an absolutely vital investment that will keep Oregonians housed and help those who have been impacted by disaster rebuild their lives,” said **Senator Mark Meek (D - Clackamas)**, who carried HB 3215 on the Senate floor.

HB 3059 creates new emergency management support programs to strengthen the state’s disaster response capabilities and establishes the Oregon Disaster Response Assistance Matching Fund. The Oregon Department of Emergency Management will use this fund to provide direct disaster response assistance to local communities. HB 3059 also directs state agencies to grant leaves of absence for any public employee volunteering in disaster relief or recovery efforts.

“Rapid and effective response is key to disaster recovery,” said **Senator Jeff Golden (D - Ashland)**, chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources. “These bills will enable our agencies to act quickly, providing the disaster aid and recovery services that our communities need, when we need them.”

Protecting and supporting wildfire impacted communities is a key component of [Senate Democrats’ 2023 Oregon Works agenda](#).

HB 3215 and HB 3059 are among the hundreds of bills that Senate Democrats rescued by negotiating an end to the Senate Republican walkout. Thanks to Senate Democrats showing up, doing their jobs, and delivering results for the people of Oregon, these bills now move to the Governor's desk for consideration.

###