



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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Senate Democrats Strengthen Rural Wildfire Protection Practices

Senate Bill 1582 will improve funding, practices of rural fire protection districts

SALEM – Today, the Senate approved Senate Bill 1582 on a vote of 18 to 8. This bill authorizes the board of directors of rural fire protection districts to annex territories that are within seven road miles of a district fire station. The request for Senate Bill 1582 came from rural fire protection district leaders.

“We have a responsibility to take immediate action to protect Oregon’s rural communities from wildfire,” said Senator Jeff Golden (D-Ashland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery. “Senate Bill 1582 is an important step forward to help strengthen our rural fire protection districts and better prepare our rural communities for the threat of wildfire. It’s not a question of if, but when, and this bill is a step in the right direction.”

“At its core, Senate Bill 1582 closes a critical loophole in our wildfire defense system,” said Senator Lew Frederick (D-Portland), who carried Senate Bill 1582. “In some cases, property owners do not pay for the services of the rural fire protection district but would receive protection from firefighters supported by the district during a wildfire event. Wildfires can destroy lives and whole communities. We ask a lot of our first responders. They deserve adequate, reliable support to do their jobs.”

Rural Fire Protection Districts (RFPDs) are special districts created to provide fire protection in rural areas of Oregon. Counties have the authority to determine the territory included in an RFPD, subject to certain restrictions and other special district process requirements. Senate Bill 1582 would authorize the board of directors of an RFPD to annex to the district territory containing lands that are within seven road miles of a district fire station or lands that are brought within seven road miles of a district fire station.

Senate Bill 1582 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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