



## Senator Ted Ferrioli

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### **Democrat leadership abandons rural Oregon again**

**Salem, OR** – Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) sent a terse letter to legislative leadership Monday demanding funding for an entomologist to help address a grasshopper outbreak in eastern Oregon. Legislative leadership has twice ignored requests to fund this crucial position, while 733,000 acres of high-value crops and pastures continue to be devoured by a grasshopper infestation.

“Democrats wonder why rural Oregon feels like the legislature just doesn’t get it, but this is a classic example,” said Ferrioli. “Farmer’s livelihoods are being eaten up, and yet leadership is just sitting by and watching it happen. After cutting the Office of Rural Policy and killing eastern Oregon’s regional investment boards, this is but another offense in a series of slights.”

More than 733,000 acres of wheat, barley, corn, potatoes hay and pasture crops have been affected by the infestation. Grasshoppers are being found in numbers averaging 31 per square yard. The threshold where economic losses begin taking effect is eight insects per square yard. This season farmers have personally treated almost 14,000 acres without any assistance from the state.

“Grasshoppers belong on a fishing hook, not piled up on farmland,” said Ferrioli. “Simple action from the Emergency Board can help us be rid of these insects.”

Ferrioli submitted a letter to Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) and House Speaker Jeff Merkely (D-Portland) requesting \$132,000 from the Emergency Board to help control the grasshoppers. The money would support an Entomologist Position at the Oregon Department of Agriculture dedicated to eastern Oregon for \$82,000. The position would also help keep other crops disease and pest free and viable in numerous markets. The remaining \$50,000 would help ease the cost to farmers of controlling the grasshoppers.

<<ATTACHMENT: Letter to Legislative Leadership>>

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