



# Foothills Fire Protection District

Hello,

My name is Rhonda Bovadilla, volunteer firefighter for Foothills Fire and Rescue. Thank you for hearing my written testimony presented on my behalf by someone other than myself. My apologies for not being able to attend, I am working today at my paid job that I maintain outside the fire department.

When we first join and get fitted for gear, we pick through some old, sometimes worn out gear and find what is the best fit and condition possible. Unfortunately, that day for me, there were no wildland boots that fit me, so I had to wear a pair of boots that were a couple sizes too big. As it turns out, the boots were awful, unsafe, unhealthy for my feet, and I needed new boots. Knowing that the department probably didn't have money to spend on boots for me, I wanted to order and pay for my own. The department did get me the boots after all, but I felt pretty bad about that. I decided that if I needed any more gear, I would just buy it myself as to not burden the budget again, and I didn't want to hog any of the remaining equipment either.

Early this winter I worked about 13 hours on a wildland fire. It was the beginning of December and pretty cold on the mountain. My wildland gloves got wet and stayed wet all day in the cold temperatures, but I didn't have a second pair of gloves to use, I had to wear the cold, wet gloves all day. I decided I should buy myself a spare pair of gloves. Again, not wanting to hog up money or gear from the fire department, I paid for them.

In total, I have purchased for myself four pair of gloves, a wildland pack, several pair of safety glasses and goggles, a gear bag, flashlight, some books for additional study, fields guides, and a high-viz beanie, plus my own MREs.

I own a small business and work there full time. It can be EXTREMELY difficult to work and make the time to volunteer. It is a labor of love for me. But, for some, the time and effort it takes to be a volunteer can be made less enticing when they have to also use old worn out gear, or purchase their own. I'm fortunate in that I can afford to do that. Not everyone can, or wants to afford it.

Hence, our low numbers??

Chief Anderson is an outstanding chief and an amazing human. I know he would give us the very best, if he could, but sometimes it's just not there to give. I hope we can change that for all of us.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Rhonda Bovadilla

