# Senate Bill 99

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#### SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Revises forestland-urban interface fire protection system. Allows State Forester to enter into cooperative agreement with governing body of local government or homeowners association. Decreases quorum for county forestland-urban interface classification committee. Modifies ability of State Forester to designate and classify forestland-urban interface land. Revises provisions concerning hearings on proposed designations and classifications. Modifies obligation of landowner to minimize fire hazards. Requires county clerk to record order from county forestland-urban interface classification committee.

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#### A BILL FOR AN ACT

- 2 Relating to forestland-urban interface fire protection; creating new provisions; and amending ORS
  - 205.130, 477.017, 477.023, 477.027, 477.029, 477.031, 477.052, 477.054, 477.057, 477.059, 477.060 and 477.061.
- 4 477.061

## 5 Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

**SECTION 1.** ORS 477.017 is amended to read:

- 7 477.017. (1) The Legislative Assembly finds that:
- 8 (a) The forestland-urban interface situation in Oregon is a result of both past and present con-

9 ditions and that, given projected trends, the forestland-urban interface situation will continue to10 grow.

11 (b) Urban and suburban structures, real property and [other] natural resources [within a 12 forestland-urban interface] are subject to increased risks of catastrophic damage by forestland-

- 13 **urban interface** fire events.
- 14 (c) There is greater complexity in forestland-urban interface fire protection than in either re-15 source land fire protection or urban structural fire protection.

(d) In dealing with the forestland-urban interface situation, major and long term solutions will
 involve local actions and efforts by property owners.

18 (e) One solution or set of solutions will not fit all situations or areas of the state.

- 19 (2) The Legislative Assembly declares that:
- (a) In order to ensure the protection of human life, the safety of citizens and fire service personnel and the highest possible level of livability in Oregon, it is necessary to provide a complete
  and coordinated fire protection system within the forestland-urban interface in Oregon.
- (b) All forestland-urban interface property owners have a basic responsibility to share in this
   complete and coordinated protection system by providing efforts against fire.
- (c) Public and property owner education and awareness is critical to forestland-urban interface
   solutions and must occur at multiple levels.
- 27 (d) In administration of ORS 477.015 to 477.061, it is the intent of the Legislative Assembly that

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property owners who will be affected by ORS 477.015 to 477.061 will be: 1

2 (A) Involved in the processes of development of administrative rules pursuant to ORS 477.015 3 to 477.061; and

(B) Notified of the outcomes of classification pursuant to ORS 477.015 to 477.057. 4

(3) The purpose of ORS 477.015 to 477.061 is to:

(a) Provide a forestland-urban interface fire protection system in Oregon that minimizes cost and 6 risk while maximizing effectiveness and efficiency for protection of the values at risk from fire. 7

(b) Promote and encourage property owner efforts to minimize and mitigate fire hazards and 8 9 risks within the forestland-urban interface.

10 (c) Promote and encourage the involvement and interaction of all levels of government and the private sector that have a direct or indirect interest and role in the forestland-urban interface sit-11 12uation over the long term.

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SECTION 2. ORS 477.023 is amended to read:

477.023. (1) The forestland-urban interface in Oregon represents a unique fire protection situ-14 15 ation that requires that unique and special measures be taken to ensure adequate public safety and protection of property, development and natural resources. Therefore, it is declared to be the public 16 policy of the State of Oregon to encourage and provide a complete and coordinated forestland-urban 17 18 interface fire protection system.

19 (2)(a) It is recognized that forestland-urban interface areas are already subject to other laws and to regulations of other agencies. It is the intent of ORS 477.015 to 477.061 to integrate with and not 20replace those other laws and regulations. 21

22(b) In the event of an apparent conflict between the obligations imposed by ORS 477.015 to 23477.061 and by other laws or regulations for which the forester is responsible and has jurisdiction, the forester shall resolve the conflict within the scope of the forester's authority. 24

25(c) [In the event of an apparent conflict,] Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this subsection, the obligations imposed by ORS 477.015 to 477.061 [shall] do not supersede or replace fed-2627eral law or regulation, other state [agency] law or [regulations] rules, or more restrictive local government ordinance or code. 28

(d) In the event of an apparent conflict between the obligations imposed by ORS 477.015 2930 to 477.061 and a more restrictive local government ordinance or code, the State Forester 31 may enter into a cooperative agreement with the governing body of a local government, the terms of which provide that ORS 477.015 to 477.061 supersede the local government ordinance 32or code in specified cases. 33

34 (e) In the event of an apparent conflict between the obligations imposed by ORS 477.015 35to 477.061 and the declaration, bylaws, rules or regulations of a homeowners association, the State Forester may enter into a cooperative agreement with the homeowners association 36 37 that allows the declaration, bylaws, rules or regulations of the homeowners association to 38 supersede ORS 477.015 to 477.061 in specified cases. The term of a cooperative agreement entered into under this paragraph may not exceed five years. 39

(f) When a real property lot includes one or more structures that have multiple owners, 40 the State Forester may enter into a cooperative agreement with one or more of the owners, 41 or a person designated as the representative of the owners, for the purposes of matters re-42 lated to ORS 477.015 to 477.061. The term of a cooperative agreement entered into under this 43 paragraph may not exceed five years. 44

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[(d)] (g) Compliance with the obligations imposed by ORS 477.015 to 477.061 does not relieve the

1 [property] owner of land of the requirements of other laws or regulations that might apply to the

2 [*property*] **land** in question.

3 (3) To encourage development of a complete and coordinated forestland-urban interface fire 4 protection system, it is declared to be in the public interest that the State Board of Forestry and 5 the State Forester take a lead role in statewide coordination of the forestland-urban interface situ-6 ation with other state and federal agencies, local governments and private sector interests that are 7 concerned with fire protection in the forestland-urban interface.

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SECTION 3. ORS 477.027 is amended to read:

9 477.027. By administrative rule, the State Board of Forestry shall establish criteria [and a 10 system] by which the forestland-urban interface shall be **identified and** classified. The criteria shall 11 recognize differences across the state in fire hazard, fire risk and structural characteristics within 12 the forestland-urban interface. [and the system] **The criteria** shall include not less than three nor 13 more than five classes of forestland-urban interface.

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SECTION 4. ORS 477.029 is amended to read:

15 477.029. (1) Pursuant to a request by the State Forester, the governing body of [each] a county containing forestland-urban interface may establish a county forestland-urban interface clas-16 sification committee of five persons, of whom one shall be appointed by the State Forester, one by 17 18 the State Fire Marshal and three by the governing body. Of the members appointed by the governing body, one must be an owner of land within the forestland-urban interface [property] who perma-19 20 nently resides on the [property or a representative thereof] land. Each appointing authority shall file with the [forester] State Forester the name of its appointee or appointees, and the persons so 21 22named shall constitute the committee for the county. Unless otherwise provided for by the ap-23pointing authority, members of the committee shall serve a term of four years and may be reappointed to any number of terms. Each member of the committee at all times is subject to 24 replacement by the appointing authority, effective upon the filing with the [forester] State Forester 25by that authority of written notice of [removal and] the name of the new appointee. 26

(2) The committee shall elect from among its members a chair and a secretary and may elect [or employ] other officers[, agents and employees] as it finds advisable. [It] The committee shall adopt rules governing its organization and proceedings and the performance of its duties, and shall keep written minutes of all its meetings. A quorum of the county forestland-urban interface classification committee for official actions [shall be four or more members present] is three members, and a quorum of a committee established pursuant to subsection (4)(a) of this section is four members.

34 (3) The governing body of the county may provide for the committee and its employees such 35accommodations and supplies and such county funds not otherwise appropriated as the governing body finds necessary for the proper performance of the committee's functions. The members of the 36 37 committee shall receive no compensation for their services, but the governing body may reimburse 38 them for their actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. By written agreement between the State Forester and the governing body, the State Forestry 39 Department may provide the functions or be responsible for **part or all of** the expenses referred to 40 in this subsection. 41

(4) In the interest of efficiency, by written agreement between the State Forester and the governing body, if a forestland classification committee is established and active within a county pursuant to ORS 526.305 to 526.340, the members of that committee may also serve [as] on the county
forestland-urban interface classification committee established by subsection (1) of this section. In

1 the event that this agreement is made, the State Forester and the governing body shall ensure that 2 either:

3 (a) A State Fire Marshal appointee and [a] **an owner of land within the** forestland-urban 4 interface [property owner] who permanently resides on the [property or a representative thereof] **land** 5 are added to the [existing] **county** forestland classification committee to bring the total number of 6 committee members to seven; or

7 (b) The State Fire Marshal approves of the current membership of the **county** forestland clas-8 sification committee and the committee includes [a] **an owner of land within the** forestland-urban 9 interface [property owner] who permanently resides on the [property or a representative thereof] 10 **land**.

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SECTION 5. ORS 477.031 is amended to read:

477.031. (1) [Upon establishment of a] A county forestland-urban interface classification committee established under ORS 477.029[, the committee shall investigate and study] shall periodically identify all land to be designated as forestland-urban interface within [its] the county [and determine which classifications of forestland-urban interface are represented according to the classification system] based on the criteria developed pursuant to ORS 477.027.

(2) [Upon the basis of its investigation and determination under subsection (1) of this section,] The
committee shall assign all forestland-urban interface forestland [within its county] identified under
subsection (1) of this section to one of the forestland-urban interface [classifications] classes developed pursuant to ORS 477.027.

21(3) Before making final designations and classifications under this section, the [county 22forestland-urban interface classification committee first shall adopt preliminary classification assign-23ments and upon its completion shall cause notice thereof to be published] committee shall adopt proposed designations and classifications. The committee shall publish notice of the proposed 24 25designations and classifications once a week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county, to be posted in three public places within the county, and to be mailed 2627to the owners of [property within the preliminary classifications] land that is affected by the proposed designations and classifications. The notice shall state the time and place for hearing or 28receiving objections, remonstrances or suggestions as to the proposed designations and classifica-2930 tions and the place where [a statement] maps of the [preliminary] proposed designations and clas-31 sifications may be inspected.

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SECTION 6. ORS 477.052 is amended to read:

477.052. (1) The county forestland-urban interface classification committee shall hold a public hearing at the time and place stated in the notice published under ORS 477.031 (3), or at such other time and place to which the hearing may be adjourned, to receive from any interested persons objections, remonstrances or suggestions relating to the proposed **designations and** classifications. Following the hearing the committee may make such changes in the [*preliminary*] **proposed designations and** classifications as it finds to be proper, hold additional hearings as it finds necessary, and thereafter shall make [*its*] final **designations and** classifications.

40 (2) All final action by the committee in designating and classifying [or reclassifying] 41 forestland-urban interface [property] shall be by formal written order, which must include a state-42 ment of findings of fact on the basis of which the order is made, and must include a list of all land 43 designated and classified. The committee shall prepare one or more [map] maps showing the 44 final designations and classifications [or reclassifications] made. The original of the order shall be 45 filed [immediately] with the county clerk of the county[, who shall maintain and make it available for 1 public inspection]. The order need not meet the requirements of ORS 205.232 to be filed and

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2 recorded. A copy of the order certified by the secretary of the committee shall be sent to the State

3 [Board of Forestry] Forester.

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4 (3) Copies of the order, lists of land and maps required by this section shall be maintained 5 in designated offices of the forester where they shall be made available for public inspection.

**SECTION 7.** ORS 477.054 is amended to read:

477.054. (1) Any owner of land **designated and** classified under ORS 477.027 to 477.057 who is aggrieved by the **designation or** classification may, within 30 days after the date of the order making the **designation and** classification, appeal to the circuit court for the county. [*The appeal shall be taken by serving the*] Notice of **an** appeal **shall be promptly served** on the secretary of the committee or, if the **designation and** classification was made under ORS 477.057, on the State Forester[, and by filing such notice with the county clerk].

13 (2) The appeal shall be tried by the circuit court as an action not triable by right to a jury.

14 **SECTION 8.** ORS 477.057 is amended to read:

477.057. (1) [In the event no] The State Forester may designate and classify forestland-urban interface, consistent with and as described in ORS 477.031 to 477.054, if a designation and classification of [the] forestland-urban interface is not made by [a] the county forestland-urban interface classification committee within a county in which such land is situated because:

(a) [no committee was appointed ] The governing body of the county fails to establish a
county forestland-urban interface committee within [for a period of time exceeding] two years
after the State Forester makes a request under ORS 477.029 (1);

(b) [or, if appointed, a] The committee [did not act for a period of time exceeding two years] fails to make a designation and classification within five years after being appointed, or the committee fails to make a designation and classification within five years of the last designation and classification made by the committee; or

(c) The committee [acted in a manner inconsistent with law, the State Forester may make the
final classifications that were otherwise to be made by a committee consistent with and in the same
manner as the process described in] fails to make a designation and classification in a manner
consistent with ORS 477.031 to 477.054.

30 (2) [*Classifications*] **Designation and classification** by the State Forester [*have*] has the same 31 force and effect as though made by a committee for that county. However, **designations and** class-32 sifications made by the State Forester cease to be effective if replaced by **designations and** classi-33 fications made pursuant to ORS 477.052 by the appropriate committee.

34 SECTION 9. ORS 477.059 is amended to read:

477.059. [(1) An owner of land within a forestland-urban interface classification, prior to a fire occurrence originating on the owner's property, shall take actions, measures or efforts to minimize or mitigate a fire hazard or risk on the property due singly, or in combination, to the presence of structures, the arrangement or accumulation of vegetative fuels or the presence of other fire hazards.]

(2) The minimum acceptable standards to comply with subsection (1) of this section shall be established in rules promulgated by the State Board of Forestry and shall be based on considerations of the variability of the forestland-urban interface classifications across the state. The rules established by this subsection shall be provided to all owners, within the appropriate forestland-urban interface classifications.]

44 [(3) Structures and real property lots in a forestland-urban interface classification that, by written 45 evaluation pursuant to rules promulgated by the board, meet the standards of subsection (2) of this

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requirements of subsection (1) of this section. The rules established by this subsection shall:

[(b) Provide for periodic renewal of the written certification based on the specific characteristics
of the applicable forestland-urban interface classifications.]
[(4) In the event that an owner fails to meet the obligations of subsection (1) of this section and a
fire occurs, then the owner shall be liable for the actual costs incurred by the forester up to a maximum

[(a) Be provided to all owners, within the appropriate forestland-urban interface classifications;

section prior to fire occurrence on the owner's property shall be considered certified as having met the

9 of \$100,000, excluding that portion of the actual costs which are the ordinary costs of the regular per10 sonnel and equipment of the forest protection district wherein the forestland-urban interface classifica11 tion is located if:]

12 [(a) The fire originates on the owner's property;]

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13 [(b) The ignition or spread of the fire is directly related to the failure to meet the obligations of 14 subsection (1) of this section; and]

15 [(c) The fire requires action by the forester pursuant to ORS 477.066 (2) and the forester incurs 16 costs in suppressing the fire.]

(1)(a) The State Board of Forestry shall by rule establish minimum standards for mini mizing or mitigating:

(A) Fire hazards or risks on land within a forestland-urban interface due to the presence
 of structures or the arrangement or accumulation of vegetative fuels; and

(B) Other fire hazards or risks or combinations of fire hazards or risks.

(b) In adopting rules under this subsection, the board shall take into account the variability of the forestland-urban interface in different parts of the state.

(c) An owner of land within a forestland-urban interface must comply with the minimum
 standards applicable to the land.

(2)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this subsection, but no more frequently than once every five years, the State Forester shall provide written notice of the applicable minimum standards established under this section to each owner of land within a forestlandurban interface, unless the owner requests a copy more frequently.

(b) The board need not give notice under paragraph (a) of this subsection to an owner
of land if the owner is a member of a homeowners association by reason of owning the land
and the State Forester has entered into a cooperative agreement with the homeowners association pursuant to ORS 477.023 (2)(e) that provides for notice to owners through the association.

35(3) An owner of land within a forestland-urban interface must certify in writing to the State Forester that the owner has complied with the applicable minimum standards estab-36 37 lished under this section not later than two years after the order designating the land as being within the forestland-urban interface is filed with the county clerk under ORS 477.052 38 (2). If a subsequent order is filed that changes the classification of the land, the owner of the 39 land must make a supplemental certification in writing to the State Forester that reflects 40 the measures that the owner has taken to comply with the applicable minimum standards 41 established under this section for the new classification not later than six months after the 42 new order is filed. 43

(4) The State Forester shall accept certifications made to the forester under subsection
(5) of this section. Any owner of land whose written certification has been accepted by the

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State Forester under this subsection is not liable for the costs of suppressing a fire under

1 2 subsection (6) of this section, unless the State Forester subsequently determines that the owner of land has provided a false certification. 3

(5) The State Board of Forestry may require periodic renewal of a certification accepted 4 by the State Forester under subsection (4) of this section, and may require supplemental 5 certifications from the owner of land that reflect the measures that the owner has taken to 6 comply with the applicable minimum standards established under this section. An owner of 7 land is responsible for maintaining the land described by the certification in compliance with 8 9 the applicable minimum standards established under this section.

(6) The owner of land designated to be within a forestland-urban interface is liable to the 10 State Forester for the costs of suppressing a fire that occurs on that land, as described in 11 12 subsection (7) of this section, if:

13 (a) The owner has failed to meet the applicable minimum standards established under this section: 14

15 (b) The fire originates on the owner's land;

16 (c) The ignition or spread of the fire is directly related to the owner's failure to meet the applicable minimum standards established under this section; and 17

(d) The fire requires action by the forester pursuant to ORS 477.066 (2).

19 (7) The liability of an owner of land under subsection (6) of this section may not exceed \$100,000. The State Forester may not seek recovery under subsection (6) of this section for 20any portion of the costs of suppressing a fire that are the ordinary costs of the regular 2122personnel and equipment of the forest protection district in which the land is located. This 23subsection does not limit the liability of the owner under ORS 477.120.

(8) Before selling any land with a forestland-urban interface, the owner of the land must 94 25inform the buyer of the minimum standards applicable to the land under this section.

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## SECTION 10. ORS 477.060 is amended to read:

27477.060. (1) In determining the annual cost of protection pursuant to ORS 477.230, the forester may consider and include the special or additional cost of fire protection for property owners within 28a forestland-urban interface classification, including the special or unique costs of assessment pro-2930 cessing and administration.

31 (2) The forester shall identify special or additional costs identified by subsection (1) of this section in the budget required by ORS 477.230 to 477.300. These special or additional costs are in ad-32dition to the annual cost of ORS 477.230 (1) and may not exceed \$25 annually for each real property 33 34 lot. Only those owners of [property] land within a forestland-urban interface classification in a forest 35protection district shall bear the special or additional cost of fire protection within the forestlandurban interface in a manner consistent with rules promulgated by the State Board of Forestry. 36

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SECTION 11. ORS 477.061 is amended to read:

38 477.061. ORS 477.015 to 477.061 shall be known as the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act [of 1997]. 39

SECTION 12. ORS 205.130 is amended to read: 40

205.130. The county clerk shall: 41

(1) Have the custody of, and safely keep and preserve all files and records of deeds and mort-42 gages of real property, and a record of all maps, plats, contracts, powers of attorney and other in-43 terests affecting the title to real property required or permitted by law to be recorded. 44

(2) Record, or cause to be recorded, in a legible and permanent manner, and keep in the office 45

of the county clerk, all: (a) Deeds and mortgages of real property, powers of attorney and contracts affecting the title to real property, authorized by law to be recorded, assignments thereof and of any interest therein when properly acknowledged or proved and other interests affecting the title to real property required or permitted by law to be recorded; (b) Certificates of sale of real property under execution or order of court, or assignments thereof or of any interest therein when properly acknowledged or proved; (c) Certified copies of death certificates of any person appearing in the county records as owning or having a claim or interest in land in the county. A death certificate recorded in the deed records of a county under this subsection is a public record and is not subject to the disclosure limitations under ORS 432.121; (d) Instruments presented for recording by the United States or the State of Oregon, or a political subdivision of either, that affect title to or an interest in real property or that lawfully concern real property; [and] (e) Instruments recognized under state law or rule or federal law or regulation as affecting title to or an interest in real property if the instrument is properly acknowledged or proved; and (f) Orders from a county forestland-urban interface classification committee filed under ORS 477.052. (3) Keep and maintain: (a) Deed and mortgage records; (b) Statutory lien records; (c) A record called the County Clerk Lien Record in which the following shall be recorded: (A) The warrants and orders of officers and agencies that are required or permitted by law to be recorded; and (B) All instruments presented for recordation when required or permitted by law to be recorded that affect the title to or an interest in real property, other than instruments recorded in the deed and mortgage records or the statutory lien records; (d) Releases, satisfactions, assignments, amendments and modifications of recorded instruments; and (e) Other instruments required or permitted by law to be recorded not affecting interests in real property. (4) Perform all the duties in regard to the recording and indexing of deeds and mortgages of real property, contracts, abstracts of judgments, notices of pendency, powers of attorney and other interests when required or permitted by law to be recorded that affect the title of real property, and in regard to the entry of satisfaction and discharge of the same, together with other documents required or permitted by law to be recorded. (5) Incur no civil or criminal liability, either personally or in an official capacity, for recording an instrument that does not comply with the provisions of law that require or allow the recording of the instrument. SECTION 13. (1) The amendments to ORS 477.029 (1) by section 4 of this 2007 Act establishing a four-year term for members of county forestland-urban interface classification committees do not apply to members who are serving on the effective date of this 2007 Act, but a member serving on the effective date of this 2007 Act may not serve more than four

44 years after the effective date of this 2007 Act unless the member is reappointed. If a member 45 is reappointed after the effective date of this 2007 Act, the term of the reappointed member

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 $\mathbf{2}$ (2) The amendments to ORS 477.029 (2) by section 4 of this 2007 Act apply to meetings

of a county forestland-urban interface classification committee taking place on or after the effective date of this 2007 Act. 4

 $\mathbf{5}$ (3) The amendments to ORS 477.059 by section 9 of this 2007 Act only apply to initial

6 certifications, supplemental certifications and renewal certifications that are required on or

after the effective date of this 2007 Act. 7

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