

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed and Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference
Vote:	8 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Clem, Esquivel, Krieger, McKeown, Reardon, Thompson, Whitsett, Witt
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Unger
Prepared By:	Beth Patrino, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Adds to permissible uses of money in Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund (Fund): emergency fire insurance policy premiums; availability and mobilization of emergency fire suppression resources on statewide basis; and paying for non-routine supplemental fire prevention, detection or suppression. Changes limits on annual expenditures from Fund. Authorizes State Forester to prepare budget request for forest protection districts that includes mitigating forest patrol assessment rates where land productivity or other economic factors seriously limit ability of landowners to provide adequate protection against fire during fire season. Phases in changes in factors used to calculate annual expenditures. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2013.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Department of Forestry role in fire protection and quick response approach
- Need to reduce number of large, costly fires; investment in resources to reduce fire severity
- Eastside forest productivity and landowner assessment increases
- Current fire cost sharing arrangement

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Modifies calculation of factor related to acquisition and placement of centrally managed fire suppression resources and acquisition of fast-mobilizing, short-term contingency resources in certain circumstances.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Department of Forestry protects approximately 16 million acres (24,900 square miles) of private and public forestland from fire. Protected lands are primarily private, but also include state and other non-federal public land and, by contract, United States Bureau of Land Management forests in western Oregon. This is more than half of the total forest land in Oregon. Essential elements of the department's fire protection program include planning, prevention, detection, initial attack, and smoke and fuels management. Landowners and the state share fire protection costs.

The Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund (OFLPF) is used to equalize firefighting costs across the state and supports the purchase of insurance to protect Oregon against disastrous fire costs. Currently, basic fire protection funding is evenly shared by landowners and the General Fund; in practice, landowners have paid a greater share of actual costs. House Bill 2050 A would make changes to the OFLPF to increase funding for acquisition of equipment to reduce the size and severity of fires, improve fire protection affordability on the eastside and move toward a 50/50 funding model over the next six years.