



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Forestry

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March 29, 2017

The Honorable Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
Room S-411, State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301



**Re: Senate Bill 1017 – Relating to wildfire buffer zones for lands in forestland-urban interface.**

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Department of Forestry appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1017. The Department of Forestry has no position on this Bill.

Senate Bill 1017 augments Oregon's Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection program by proposing a tax credit for landowners that follow the wildfire buffer zone guidelines. The tax credit amount is not specified in the bill and is proposed as a percentage of the assessment under ORS 477.230, referred to as the forest patrol assessment.

Senate Bill 360, which was passed in 1997, established Oregon's Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection program. Senate Bill 360 protection standards have been implemented in 17 counties where roughly 40 percent of 151,000 property owners have self-certified that they meet the protection standards, which they must do every five years. While the initial implementation of Senate Bill 360 was accomplished through federal grants, ODF's annual costs to administer the program is about \$60,000, not including personnel costs. With Senate Bill 1017's proposal of an annual tax credit tied to certification, ODF would expect a substantial increase in program administration costs and personnel costs as we move from a 5 year certification to an annual certification.

In closing, our 2016 Fire Program Review calls for an effectiveness review of Senate Bill 360 – Oregon's Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Program. The concepts proposed in Senate Bill 1017 will be incorporated into this review.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this bill. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



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c: Jason Miner, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Manager  
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Tom Imeson, Board of Forestry, Chair  
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