

## Analysis

### Item 29: Department of Forestry

#### Facilities Replacement

---

**Analyst:** Matt Stayner

**Request:** Increase the General Fund appropriation for the Department of Forestry, Administrative Services Division, by \$575,789 and authorize the establishment of two limited-duration positions to complete the workload related to the reconstruction of the Department's damaged and destroyed infrastructure due to the 2020 wildfires.

**Analysis:** Several Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) facilities were damaged or destroyed in the Santiam River Canyon during this wildfire season. These included communication facilities and the Santiam Unit office in Lyons. Although ODF and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) risk management program continue to work on processing insurance claims for the damage itself, ODF does not have current capacity within the facilities program to deal with additional workload associated with completing the damage assessment, procurement and construction management, and administration of the claims.

The agency's request includes funding for two limited-duration positions for 30 months which includes the remaining six months of the current biennium and the entire 24 months of the next biennium. The cost associated with the remaining six months of the current biennium for these positions is \$119,690. Although it is likely that the need for the positions will extend into the subsequent biennium, the additional need should be evaluated as a part of the budgeting process for the 2021-23 biennium during the upcoming 2021 legislative session.

**Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board allocate \$119,690 General Fund from the Emergency Fund and authorize the establishment of two limited-duration positions (0.50 FTE) for six months for the workload associated with the damaged facilities reconstruction or replacement projects due to the 2020 wildfires.

29  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
Klein

---

**Request:** Allocate \$575,789 from the State Emergency Fund and establish two new limited duration positions for 30 months, phased-in on January 1, 2021, to meet capacity needs to handle increased workload related to the rebuilding of the Department’s buildings and infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the Labor Day 2020 fires.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request with the following modifications: allocate \$119,690 from the State Emergency Fund and establish two new limited-duration positions for six months, phased in on January 1, 2021, to meet capacity needs to handle increased workload related to the rebuilding of the Department’s buildings and infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the Labor Day 2020 fires.

**Discussion:** On Labor Day, September 7, 2020, Oregon saw the start of one of the worst fire events in state history. As part of this event, the Department lost the North Cascade District – Santiam Unit office in Lyons, as well as key communication infrastructure throughout the Santiam Canyon. The Department is currently working with the Department of Administrative Services Risk Management on filing an insurance claim for the loss of the district office with plans to rebuild as soon as possible. In the coming months, the Department needs to focus on restoring communications infrastructure to full capacity to ensure operational effectiveness and firefighter life safety prior to the start of the 2021 fire season.

To facilitate the rebuilding efforts, the Department needs additional personnel to focus on this workload. The Department has requested two limited duration positions to focus on damage assessment, administration of insurance claims and other recovery efforts, procurement workload, and ensuring rebuilding efforts align with long-term strategic planning objectives. The Department has requested these positions for 30 months, six months in the 2019-21 biennium and the entire 24 months of the 2021-23. This request is being recommended for six months during the 2019-21 biennium, and extension of the positions is included as part of the Governor’s Budget for 2021-23.

**Legal Reference:** Allocation of \$119,690 from the State Emergency Fund to supplement the appropriation made by chapter 664, section 1 (1), Oregon Laws 2019, for the Department of Forestry, Agency Administration for the 2019-21 biennium.



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Forestry

State Forester's Office

2600 State St.

Salem, OR, 97310

503-945-7200

[www.oregon.gov/ODF](http://www.oregon.gov/ODF)

November 4, 2020

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Tina Kotek, Co-Chair  
State Emergency Board  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301-4048

## **RE: Oregon Department of Forestry—Limited Duration Capacity Request**

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

### **Nature of the Request**

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) respectfully requests an increase of \$575,789.00 in General Fund and position authority to hire two limited-duration employees to provide the capacity necessary to handle the anticipated increase in workload related to the rebuilding of the department's buildings and infrastructure that were damaged or destroyed by the Labor Day 2020 fires.

### **Agency Action**

The Labor Day fire event resulted in the worst fire season for ODF-protected lands and one of the worst in state history. On September 7, atop multi-year drought conditions and historically low fuel moistures and humidity, a Red Flag Warning was issued. A strong cold front arrived in the early evening hours, with east-northeast winds at sustained speeds of 20 to 30 mph and gusts from 50 to 60 mph. This was the strongest 3-day easterly wind event during fire season since at least 1950.

Fanned by these winds, the Beachie Creek fire threatened more than 19,000 structures along the Highway 22 corridor and the Santiam River Canyon. More than 18,000 people were evacuated and 1,323 structures were destroyed, including the department's North Cascade District—Santiam Unit office in Lyons and key communications infrastructure. The Santiam Unit office housed multiple ODF programs and served the local community for over 50 years. The department is currently working with Department of Administrative Services Risk Management on the insurance claim process, but work to restore the communications infrastructure to full capacity will need to begin as soon as possible. It is critical to operational effectiveness and firefighter safety that these sites are fully functional prior to the 2021 fire season.

The department needs additional capacity to support and facilitate the recovery and reconstruction efforts that will help the department recover from the loss of key facilities assets as quickly as possible to ensure mission readiness and business continuity for future fire seasons. Therefore, the department is requesting two full-time equivalent (FTE) limited-duration positions for 30 months (a

Construction Project Manager 2 and an Operations and Policy Analyst 3). The scope of work for these positions would include:

- Damage surveying and assessment.
- Administration of the insurance claim and recovery efforts.
- Procurement, design, and construction needs related to lost facilities assets, including all related utility infrastructure needs.
- Alignment of rebuilding efforts with the agencies long-term strategic planning objectives.

**Action Requested**

ODF respectfully requests an increase of \$575,789.00 in General Fund and two-limited duration FTE to complete the workload related to the reconstruction of the department’s damaged and destroyed infrastructure resulting from the 2020 Labor Day fire event.

**Legislation Affected**

HB5019, Chapter 664, section 1 (1), Oregon Laws 2019

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Peter Daugherty  
Oregon State Forester  
(503) 945-7211

c: Jason Miner, Governor's Office  
Board of Forestry  
Matt Stayner, Legislative Fiscal Office  
Renee Klein, Chief Financial Office