

February 5, 2020

Chair Senator Golden
Senate Committee on Wildfire Reduction and Recovery
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for Land Use, Defensible Space, and Building Code Provisions of SB 1536

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1536. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. Our supporters come from across Oregon, from every county in the state.

1000 Friends of Oregon supports Sections 8-14 of SB 1536 that address land use, defensible space, and building codes. We support the development of a statewide wildfire hazard map by the Department of Land Conservation and Development, in consultation with cities and counties. We support the use of Statewide Planning Goal 7 (Natural Hazards) to set minimum local standards for wildfire planning. We support the adoption and implementation of updated building codes and minimum development standards, including limiting development in high-hazard areas to prevent loss of life and property due to wildfire hazards. And we support technical assistance and funding to be provided to local governments to facilitate the implementation and maintenance of this meaningful wildfire hazard planning.

Our land use system is an effective and affordable tool to reduce risk of wildfire, and must be utilized to save lives and property. We continue to experience tragic fires across the West. Oregon must take courageous leadership, foster collaboration across the state to find meaningful solutions, and use the land use system to minimize the risk and impacts of wildfire. 1000 Friends of Oregon stands ready to work with stakeholders on the bill, and are available to provide any additional information on how to develop the land use pieces of the larger wildfire package.

Thank you,
Scott Hilgenberg
Rural Lands Legislative Attorney
1000 Friends of Oregon