

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Baertschiger, and members of the committee:

I am writing to register my support for the wildfire risk mitigation elements of SB 1514 and SB 1536. I served on the Mitigation Committee of the Governor's Council on Wildfire Response. My role on the committee was primarily related to the Intermountain West Joint Venture's work with the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative to address the risks wildfires pose to rural communities and rangelands in southeast Oregon. However, the mitigation committee's recommendations could also result in significant benefits for birds and other wildlife across Oregon. Oak woodlands from southern Oregon to the eastern end of the Columbia Gorge are among the highest priorities for fuel reduction treatments that would also improve habitat for a wide variety of birds while reducing risks to neighboring communities.

As Chad Davis of the Oregon Department of Forestry noted in his testimony yesterday, programmatic options to address wildfire risks on Oregon's rangelands are not as well developed as those for forestlands. However, the risks to rangelands in eastern Oregon are very real, as noted in the attached handout based on the Mitigation Committee's report, and I hope the committee will keep in mind the importance of building a program that truly addresses all lands.

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