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Senator Jeff Golden, Chair

Senate Committee on Wildfire Reduction and Recovery

Transmitted by e-mail

Dear Senator Golden and Members of the Wildfire Reduction and Recovery Committee,

Thank you for taking up SB 1536 in a hearing today, and thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. SB 1536 is the product of a large effort from the Governor's Council on Wildfire Response devoted to the goal of better positioning Oregon to prevent, respond to and recover from wildfire, and provides a pathway for wildfire risk mitigation through land use planning, building codes, and defensible space standards.

As written, there are some overarching concerns with how SB 1536 would be implemented I would like to bring to your attention:

- The Department of Land Conservation and Development is charged with developing a risk map and wildfire risk mitigation standards in the current language of SB 1536. While the State of Oregon has an important role, land use planning is implemented at the local government level. As you know, Oregon's communities are incredibly diverse, and wildfire risk mitigation will not be 'one-size-fits-all'. Please consider adding local government in a coordinating role with the Department of Land Conservation and Development for both development of a risk map, and risk mitigation standards.
- The current language directs developing two different risk maps: one coordinated by the Department of Land Conservation and Development under the Land Use Planning section, the other by the Oregon State Fire Marshal under the Defensible Space section. Both maps are intended as an implementation tool for risk mitigation standards, including defensible space. Creating one map will create greater consistency and clarity in risk mitigation, as well as cost savings for map development and long term maintenance. Additionally, two risk maps may create challenges for the insurance industry, whose role is recognized in Section 10.
- There are opportunities for partnerships between local governments, fire districts and the Oregon State Fire Marshal to implement defensible space requirements. Building flexibility into the language that would allow maximizing those partnership opportunities is important for the long term success of defensible space implementation.
- The Department of Land Conservation and Development is currently charged with establishing a program to implement the building codes section of this bill. Engaging the Department of Consumer and Business Services and the Oregon Building Codes Division is critical for implementation.

- A large number of local governments do not have the ability to financially absorb the requirements of this bill if funding is not adequately structured over time. Funding for implementation of any of these pieces is a critical discussion point.

I understand amendments to the bill will be proposed which may address all of the points included in this letter. I appreciate the work that has gone, and continues to go into, this bill. Thank you Committee Members for considering the importance of refining the language and concepts of SB 1536 so implementation does not become an undue burden for the State of Oregon or local governments.

Sincerely,



Holly Kerns
Planning Director
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