

Date: February 5, 2020

To: Senate Committee on Wildfire Reduction and Recovery

Re: SB 1514, SB 1516, SB 1536 and related Wildfire Committee Recommendations

My name is Scott Russell
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Scappoose, OR 97056

My family owns several hundred acres of forest land in Columbia, Washington and Douglas counties. During 2008, a lightning storm started several wildfires near our home in Columbia County. We were able to spot the smoke the next day and direct ODF personnel to it and we supplied a bulldozer to clear a road to the fire and establish containment lines. The fire was on adjacent land and in mature timber. ODF and the local city fire departments both responded, and the fire was put out with the assistance of a helicopter provided by ODF. Six years later, several lightning strike fires started, one on our forest land. We located the one on our land, started the extinguishing and directed ODF crews to finish and do the mop up. Last summer our forest land in Douglas County was in the middle of a 15,000 acre burn near Canyonville which was ignited by a homeless camp. The trees were thirty years old and a total loss as the trees are not big enough to salvage. This is a total loss to us and we will be replanting the land this spring. No one provides insurance for forest land from fire so we will have to bear the costs of replanting. There is no way we can recover the thirty years of lost growth. Note that living on the forest land has resulted in early detection of fire. Please don't construct policy which discourages occupation on the land.

I have infinite respect for the ODF in their ability to quickly respond to wildfires. ODF also has history of cooperation with the local fire departments which is essential when time counts. Please do not change this fine co-operative system.

I applaud the effort to reduce fuels in the forest which will reduce or eliminate the intensity of wildfire. If done with regard to proper tree spacing, and proper forest management, it could be self-financing. The current funding and tax system is working and can be gently modified to support future wildfire suppression. Any modifications to the current systems must be done with the expertise of the Oregon Department of Forestry. They are the current and historical experts. Creating higher fire taxes on the property owners is a poor idea. We are already losing forest landowners due to the uncertainties of the industry. Oregon tree landowners pay higher fire costs than our neighboring states. We paid just about \$3000 last year for fire protection.

Thank you for the time.

Sincerely,

Scott Russell

Member Oregon Small Woodlands Association and American Tree Farm System