

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

Thank you for opening this meeting to public testimony, I appreciate the opportunity to share my views about SB 1514. My name is Ralph Bloemers – I'm the Senior Staff Attorney for Crag Law Center and I address you today on behalf of two of our clients: Oregon Wild and Cascadia Wildlands.

First, I'd like to express my appreciation for the hard work you've done to refine SB 1514. The bill offers a much narrower and focused approach than other proposals, and therefore the bill is far more likely to be successful in its stated goals. I appreciate the amendments proposed by Senator Golden that call for stronger sideboards on thinning activities in backcountry areas, and reporting requirements that ensure that fuels reduction work is not driven by economic motivations.

I would like to make a recommendation for a small – but important – amendment that help this legislation achieve its stated goals:

The bill currently identifies a list of criteria for which sites should be prioritized; **however, notably absent as of today is language that prioritizes fuels reduction treatments in forests that pose the greatest risk to people and property: even-aged stands near communities.**

Researchers have found that monoculture, even-aged trees planted tightly together after clearcutting are more prone to uncharacteristically severe wildfire than older, native forests. In fact, [one recent study](#) conducted in southwestern Oregon found that even-aged stands owned by timber companies burn 30% more severely than older forests on public lands. [Scientists have also found](#) that logging backcountry areas does nothing to protect people from fire risks.

**This bill seeks to protect communities from severe wildfires, and therefore, I ask that you please consider adding an amendment to prioritize treating even-aged stands in close proximity to where people actually live.**

I would be more than happy to provide additional information if helpful. Thank you for all you do,

Ralph Bloemers  
Crag Law Center  
On behalf of Oregon Wild and Cascadia Wildlands