



The Nature
Conservancy



December 18, 2020

Re: Testimony in support of Wildfire Funding in LC 28

Dear Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek, and Members of the Committee on the Third Special Session of 2020:

The undersigned organizations write to express our joint support of the proposed allocation of \$100 million to the Emergency Board for wildfire response and recovery funding within LC 28.

State and local governments have had to move quickly and respond to the extraordinary tragedy of the 2020 fire season. The work is far from over, and our wildfire response requires continued attention and investment as our communities and forests heal and rebuild. The funding within LC 28 is also necessary to support targeted efforts to reduce future fire risk while also building resiliency to withstand the increasing severity and frequency of wildfires in Oregon.

This year's fire season underscores the need for significant policy reform and increased investments in wildfire preparedness and response to protect lives, property, and public health and safety. A comprehensive approach to achieving these goals is needed to achieve community preparedness and wildfire risk reduction around homes and structure, forest restoration and resiliency, and utility mitigation and transmission system stability.

An essential first step towards achieving these goals is developing a State Wildfire Risk and Hazard Map that builds consistent definitions, uses appropriate data, and implements best practices into its design. If a map such as this were to be available in the 2021 session, the product would greatly aid the Legislature as you continue deliberations on various policies. Including rebuilding communities and future resiliency; land use planning, management, and building; and guide strategic state and federal investments in community preparedness, wildfire risk reduction, and forest health.

We urge you to approve this funding during the special session and provide direction, authority, and the resources necessary to complete this mapping's development at the soonest opportunity. Doing so will ensure that the Legislature has the map in time for critical legislative discussions on wildfires that lie ahead.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Amelia Porterfield, Senior Policy Advisor, The Nature Conservancy
Dylan Kruse, Director of Government Affairs, Sustainable Northwest
Mary Kyle McCurdy, Deputy Director, 1000 Friends of Oregon