



October 25, 2022

Honorable Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives Dan Rayfield:

The 2020 Labor Day wildfires impacted each of our counties, and we want to emphasize for you the value of the House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery. Former Chair Brian Clem and current Chair Paul Evans have both provided excellent leadership and problem solving skills. As the 2023 Legislature approaches, our hope is that you will continue to see the rationale in forming up this Committee for the duration of the regular session.

In coming to this recommendation, we specifically note:

- Recovery efforts are a marathon, not a sprint. While we'd love to tell you that every necessary recovery project is complete, the reality is that many of the issues that are plaguing service delivery in state and local frameworks, for example workforce and inflation, are also complicating wildfire recovery. The Committee could and should have a role in problem solving as recovery work continues.
- The large and likely last federal investment in wildfire recovery funding, the so-termed CDBG-DR for Oregon has not yet been approved by the US Housing and Urban Development Department, and there are already signals that these investments will be challenging to implement in Oregon. The Committee is already involved in some of these nascent issues and can play an important role in providing solutions before problems escalate.
- The newly formed Department of Emergency Management is just getting its feet under it, and is working through issues related to emergency preparedness writ large. Wildfire continues to be Oregon's most existential threat, and there are a number of lessons learned from the fire seasons of 2020, 2021, and 2022 that the Committee could and should hear about.
- The American West is predicted to be ground zero for larger and more destructive wildfire. Interstate forums addressing prevention, resiliency, and recovery trainings and sharing now exist. Participants continue to learn and implement new strategies and the Committee could and should stay attuned to these region-wide efforts.

Thank you for considering our comments on the importance of this Legislative Committee.