

**From:** [Christy Tattersall](#)  
**To:** [HWREC Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** The Oregon Legislature House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery  
**Date:** Sunday, February 14, 2021 11:28:18 PM

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Dear Members of the House Special Committee:

My elderly parents lived in Vida when the Holiday Farm Fire blazed through the McKenzie River corridor on September 7, 2020. My parents have lived in their house for over 20 years, and lost everything in the fire. They owned two properties next door to each other. The main house property in which they lived included several garages and storage buildings. They also had a guest house located on the same property closer to the highway. The property next door was a two-story log house.

Both properties were completely destroyed by the fire. This includes a total of three houses and respective parking structures, and their foundations destroyed. We also had to remove a total of (85) old growth 150-200 ft. tall trees from both properties. It has been a daunting task to find contractors for debris clean up, tree removal, and soil erosion control. We also had to remove all electrical poles/lines on both properties. We had damage to septic systems that needed to immediately be repaired as to maintain the integrity to withstand heavy rain. We still have to have the septic tanks, and wells inspected.

Both properties fall within the Riparian zone, and possibly the Floodplain zone. In the 20 plus years my parents have lived on and owned these properties, there has never been a time the water level ever came close to any structures. We plan to rebuild and use the same foundation footprint that was approved before the new riparian guidelines. We have three houses to build, along with other structures that were in place before the fire.

It is totally unrealistic to expect that we have all the permits needed within one year to begin the build process, especially for three houses. I just began looking for an architect to help us with this next phase of planning. So far, they are months out before they can begin working on our properties. They also told me they are having a difficult time finding an available engineer for clients that are currently at that stage in planning. The number of contractors, resources, and construction materials in Eugene and surrounding areas is limited. There are 400 homes destroyed by this Holiday Farm Fire, as well as the many homes destroyed during the same time, from fires in nearby counties.

Looking at the timeline post fire, it was several weeks before we were even allowed in the area to see our properties and confirm the extent of damage. At that time, we were escorted and allotted an hour to try and retrieve anything that survived the fire because of the damage and dangerous conditions along the highway. It was a good month and a half after the fire before we could fully access our properties to begin assessment of the damage and determine a plan of action to move forward. I did not know that the foundations had to be removed until I was able to secure a contractor. It took time to find a surveyor who was available before we could begin the debris/foundation cleanup. And then it took time to find an available arborist and proceed with the enormous task involved with tree removal. And now, to this date, we currently have weather to contend with, long traffic lines on highway 126 while ODOT tree and debris removal takes place, power and communication lines restored, and other safety work to secure the highway.

I ask that you consider the incredible amount of devastation, time-lines, resources and materials available that will take to rebuild the many homes destroyed from the ground up. This is an enormous task to manage, let alone be squeezed in this short time frame. We barely had any time to emotionally process this loss, find a new place to live with limited availability in town, and replace necessities like clothing, furniture, linens, kitchenware, etc. Here we are 6 months post fire and I'm still in the cleanup phase to have tree branch debris removed, clearing to prep for foundations, let alone begin the design and plans for the approval of necessary permits. If you drive along the highway, you will see most all properties are in this same rebuild phase.

I respectfully request you extend this timeline to at least 5 years, especially for homeowners with multiple properties. I also ask that you closely evaluate the permitting procedures to make it simpler, to streamline this process more efficiently, for the enormous overwhelming task that lies ahead for city planners, as well as homeowners and contractors. Another important consideration in this matter is we are in the middle of a pandemic! This greatly affects and reduces the availability of resources and supplies, as well as the access and availability of planners and inspectors from the Lane County office as they manage this increased workload.

Thank you for your consideration in modifying these guidelines and procedures to help us all move forward during these extremely challenging times!

Sincerely,

Christy Tattersall