

**From:** [Martin Desmond](#)  
**To:** [HWREC Exhibits](#); [Rep Gomberg](#)  
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Committee Chair Brian Clem, Representative Gomberg and other members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in regards to wildfire recovery hearing scheduled for February. I have lived in Newport for the past seven years and the past 35 years in Oregon.

Back in my much younger and more intelligent years, I used to work on Forest Service and Park Service hot shot crews in Oregon, California, and Wyoming. While I was working on Oregon national forests such as the Umpqua, Deschutes, and Malheur, we used to refer to those forests as "abestos" forests because these forests never burned much more than half an acre from a lightning strike. I spent much of the summer and fall months either stacking brush and painting government buildings.

Fast forward to the last few years. To say that we are in a climate change crisis does not even address the true seriousness of the problem. We should have addressed the increasing amounts of forest biomass and warming temperatures more than 25 years ago. However, we failed to take appropriate action.

We are now in the equivalent of a Stage 4 cancer. Here in Lincoln County where I live, we had the Echo Mountain fire which destroyed several hundred homes. While I can not say that we will have another fire of this magnitude in Lincoln County this coming summer, I feel quite confident to predict that we will have another wildfire of this same magnitude in Lincoln County within the next five years.

Here in Oregon, we are in a much more serious problem than California to fight these wildfires. CAL Fire is a far larger fire fighting agency with over 15,000 firefighters plus their convict crews. Our Oregon Department of Forestry is a far smaller organization. Here in Oregon, our forest biomass is far greater than much of the forests in California. We here in Oregon will not have sufficient resources to stop these wildfires. We will have a continual re-occurrence of the 2020 wildfires which swept through many rural communities.

I would like to express support for HB 3126 which will direct the *Legislative Policy and Research Office shall study strategies to promote recovery from the 2020 wildfire season and present the results of the study in a report to an appropriate committee.*

I will note that strategies to study need to be robust and very honest to Oregonians that we have the equivalent of a Stage 4 cancer and that it is likely too late to do much to curb the extent of the wildfires. Elected officials in Oregon need to be honest with Oregonians that we will be having many, many smoke filled summers in the years to come. There will be many fires that burn down many rural homes and communities. While I do not want to sound overly pessimistic, millions of acres of our forests on public and private lands will be burned and destroyed in the decades to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Martin Desmond