

Dear Committee Members:

As a former fishing guide and natural resource management consultant, I want to voice my support for the Legislature to create state-wide standards for defensible wildfire setbacks around Oregon's communities that are located within forested areas. Having state-wide standards that are created and informed by empirically-based data and research from Oregon's universities, as well as state and federal natural resource agencies, will help our state get "in front" of the increased risk that our forested landscapes face as our climate continues to change in the coming years and decades. Having a state-wide approach to creating community wildfire defensible areas will also minimize the risk of local communities "opting out" of such planning, with the result that they then rely on the state's taxpayers to pay for intense wildfire management and response.

In addition, research has demonstrated that prescribed burns, during the winter and spring months when such prescriptions can be adequately controlled, also reduce the risk of catastrophic fires later, during the fire season in August and September. Consequently, the legislature would be helping to create a more secure future for Oregon's forested landscapes and the biota that they support (including threatened and endangered species as well as other wildlife such as deer, elk bear, cougar and other species), and our local economies through enhanced forest management practices (including sustained harvest of forest products). In addition, prescribed burns will help sustain Oregon's tourism dependent businesses that rely on healthy watersheds, including the rivers, landscapes and amenities that such ecosystems provide by supporting—and funding—prescribed burns administered by state and local entities trained in such practices.

Respectfully,  
Paul Hoobyar