

Dear Committee Members

As a former fishing guide, and a retired natural resource management consultant, I want to voice my support for the Legislature creating state-wide standards for establishing defensible wildfire setbacks for communities and developments in forested landscapes. Having state-wide guidelines for wildfire defensible setbacks ensures that all communities and developments within forested landscapes will have such plans and practices in place. These guidelines and requirements will help decrease the risk of catastrophic fires destroying local communities, as well as the landscapes where they are placed. And such legislation minimizes the prospects of a community or development "opting out" of such planning and subsequently relying on the state's tax payers to pay for the costs of wildfire suppression during the next catastrophic fire event.

In addition, research has shown that prescribed burning, during the winter and spring months, diminishes the chances of catastrophic fires during the fire season of August and September. Therefore, I would encourage the Legislature to support the expansion of a state-wide prescribed burning program that is informed by research from Oregon's universities, as well as research from federal and state natural resource agencies. Having an expanded prescribed burning program will support Oregon's forestry-dependent businesses (including timber management companies), as well as support our local economies by minimizing the risk of catastrophic fires that destroy entire watersheds, including private residences and community infrastructure. Additionally, prescribed burning will help sustain the tourism-based businesses that depend upon healthy watersheds, forested landscapes, and healthy rivers that make Oregon a national and international destination for visitors who want to experience our natural beauty.

Respectfully,
Paul Hoobyar