

Senator Golden and Members of the Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your efforts in developing wildfire policy.

Scientific research is concluding the 2020 fires in the Cascades were caused by the effects of climate change. Easterly winds, years of dry conditions, reduced snowpack, irresponsible timber management, and 100 years of fire suppression created the optimal conditions for fire. This summer and fall, the conditions are similar.

Fire suppression efforts should start at or around the home and community and building in the urban wildfire interface should be discouraged. Mid forest suppression thinning has scientifically been proven futile. Firefighters should concentrate efforts on wildfires that pose direct threats to home and community. Fire - wise homes and communities with defensible spaces are necessary to protect them from wildfire. Most communities affected by wildfires are mostly rural, low income, immigrant, elderly, and other marginalized people who need assistance in developing defensible spaces.

Section 18 of the bill refers to "commercial thinning" which is anti - scientific, removes carbon sequestered in the forest and contributes to climate change which fuels a hotter climate leading to more fires. "Commercial thinning" also wastes ODF funding that could be used in fire -wise protection and prescribed burns in safe weather conditions which mitigates fire intensity. Less than 1% of thousands of acres thinned annually encounter a fire. Humidity, time of day, and wind direction influence fire behavior more than a properly thinned forest. Most "commercial thinning" equates to logging which includes removing older and larger fire resistant trees. Plantation farming of a mono culture timber crop (Douglas fir) burned over 75% of the Holiday Farm Fire east of Eugene/ Springfield. Private timber plantation farming creates intense fires and is not responsible timber management.

As evident in the Holiday Farm Fire complex footprint, "salvage logging" or post fire timber harvests have been rampant to near frenzy status. Most of these trees are still alive but are being removed under the guise of creating safe zones. How many thousands of feet from a road is a determined safe zone? Even a burned forest sequesters carbon by not being milled or processed. This post fire timber harvesting is unregulated and would not be occurring if carried out under normal timber sale processes. These clear cuts are contributing to climate change by releasing carbon from processed lumber.

The Governor's Executive Order 20-04 states we are in a climate emergency. When you are in a climate emergency, putting more carbon in to the atmosphere is not a prudent strategy either by "commercial thinning" or post fire timber harvesting or "salvage logging". We have to work with, not against fire.

I hope you will consider some of these comments as you develop your wildfire policy.

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