



April 09, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
900 Court St. N.E.
Salem, OR 97031

SB 762 -1—suggested changes

Dear Senator Golden, Vice-Chair Heard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your continued hard work on responsible wildfire legislation. On behalf of the Oregon SageCon Partnership, and in addition to previous input to the legislature and Governor's office, please accept this testimony. As SB 762 has taken lead bill position in the Senate, thank you for the effort to revise previous provisions of SB's 248 and 287 and produce an improved product in the form of the SB 762 -1 amendment. Understanding that there are -3 amendments in the works, but not yet knowing if or what of the suggestions below have been incorporated there, this testimony re-iterates the suggested improvements to the SB 762 -1 foundation.

If made, these specific language suggestions would be helpful in building relevance and support for this legislation across diverse interests who depend upon and care about the 1/3 of Oregon that exists as sagebrush rangelands threatened by problematic wildfire conditions. For more information on SageCon and its partners, see: <https://sageconpartnership.com/about>

Sincerely,
Brett Brownscombe
SageCon Partnership Coordinator

NOTE: References below are to the Section, Page and Line numbers in the SB 762-1 amendment dated 4/1/21. Suggested additions appear in red and redactions in ~~strikethrough~~

Section 7 (Statewide Map)

P.6, line 6: "(b) Be sufficiently detailed to allow the assessment of wildfire risk at the property-ownership level **and in the context of both forests and rangeland wildfire.**

Section 18 (Reduction of Wildfire Risk)

P.16 line 8: “(b) The department shall ensure the program is consistent with the objectives described in this section and, on a biennial basis, select, administer and evaluate projects consistent with the program objectives described in this subsection.

P.16 line 10: “(c) When developing the program and project selection criteria, the department shall:

- i. to the extent practicable, consult and cooperate with state and federal agencies, tribes, counties, cities and other units of local government, public and private forestland and rangeland owners, forest and rangeland collaboratives, and other relevant community organizations, and
- ii. ensure consistency with the priorities described in subsection (2) of this section.

p.16, line 18

“(a) In collaboration with the Oregon State University Extension Service ..., giving priority to projects within the landscapes that are:

“(A)” On all lands in the four highest eNVC risk geographies ...

“(B) Inclusive of ~~On~~ federal lands with treatment projects currently approved or to be approved within the current field season for treatment projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

“(C) Focusing on treatments protective of human life, property, critical infrastructure, watershed health and forest and or rangeland habitat restoration; and

“(D) Part of a collaborative partnership with agreements across diverse forest or rangeland stakeholders on a large, landscape-scale approach to addressing the underlying causes of poor wildfire resilience and elevated risk, or demonstrating innovative approaches to doing so that could translate to a larger scale.

p.17, line 2: “(b) To the extent practicable, ~~design the projects~~ identify and support projects designed to:

p.17, line 4: “(B) Leverage the collective power of public-private partnerships, federal funding and state funding, including coordination of funding to support collaborative initiatives addressing the underlying causes of elevated forest and rangeland wildfire risk across ownerships; and

p.17, line 13: “(e) Design the projects to involve the Oregon Wildfire Workforce Corps Program established by section 20a of this 2021 Act, to the maximum extent possible, ~~for community protection projects located in the wildland-urban interface,~~ and subject to funding available in the Oregon Wildfire Workforce Corps Fund established by section 20b of this 2021 Act;

p.17, line 24: “(g) ~~Ensure~~ Engage in monitoring of the project to produce useful information on which to base recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.

Section 20

p.18, line 22: “Section 20. (1) The State Forestry Department shall **obligate funds needed** to complete the operation of projects under section 18 of this 2021 Act no later than June 30, 2023.

p.19, line 9: “(c) A summary of outreach and coordination with relevant federal and state agencies, **tribes**, counties, cities and other units of local government, public and private forestland and rangeland owners, forest **and rangeland** collaboratives, and other relevant community organizations to identify and select landscapes for treatment and develop selection criteria for projects.

p.19, line 30 / p.20 line 1: “(C) A qualitative and quantitative summary of the use of prescribed fire **activities and invasive annual grass treatments for** wildfire danger reduction that, at a minimum, states the number of acres burned **or treated** and any resulting or anticipated changes in landscape conditions related to enhanced resiliency or the mitigation of wildfire risk to public values;

p.20, line 7: “(E) Recommendations for creating optimal working relationships with forest **and rangeland** collaboratives, **effective partnership entities**, and other relevant community organizations regarding future wildfire risk reduction projects;

Section 20(a)-(c) (Oregon Wildfire Workforce Corps)

p.20, line 26:

“(a) Reducing the risk wildfire poses to communities, **habitat**, and critical infrastructure.

“(b) Helping to create fire-adapted communities **and resilient landscapes**.

p.22, line 5: “(e) Establishes guidelines for prioritizing grant-supported projects to reduce community fire risks, **enhance habitat and landscape resilience**, promote youth and young adult workforce development and educational experiences and reduce hazardous fuels.

p.22, line 24: “SECTION 20c. (1) As used in this section, ‘eligible organization’ includes Oregon-based nonprofit youth job development organizations and public entities that provide programs of job training, skill development and forest **or rangeland**-related career path training.