

April 10, 21

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Response

From: Holly Coit, RN, MN
Trustee, The Nature Conservancy of Oregon

RE: SB 762

Dear Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to today to offer my strong support of SB 762. After many years of study and with the experiences of this past wildfire season, the devastating loss of life, property and natural lands it is time to pass this proposed legislation. This bill represents policy grounded in science and is the result of several years of thoughtful study.

Unfortunately, the prediction is for longer and harsher wildfire seasons, which requires urgent action and a proactive approach to mitigate the damages to our people and our lands and to assist to adapt to a changing climate. Fortunately, this issue has been carefully studied for the past several years and has resulted in a collaborative, science-based plan detailed in SB 762.

A multifaceted approach to address both the reduction of wildfire risk as well as increasing the resilience of communities to the effects of wildfires is immediately required. Wildfires affect, not just our forests and precious natural resources but vulnerable communities with limited resources to respond to fire and smoke. As a health care provider, I am particularly concerned about the short and long term effect of smoke exposure from wildfires in all people, but particularly in citizens with underlying respiratory ailments. For children, both those with a history of asthma and those without known respiratory illness, smoke can trigger exacerbations with severe consequences.

We must act now. After several years of study within the Governor's Wildfire Council and the legislature, the SB 762 outlines actions and policies needed to protect our people and our lands. Please act now as the next wildfire season looms to put in place this comprehensive wildfire legislation.

Thank you for your leadership and work to find solutions to the critical issue of increasing wildfire in Oregon.