

Senate Natural Resources Committee

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Thank you Chairperson Golden, Vice Chair Girod, members of the Committee.

For the record, my name is Tom DeLuca, I am the Dean of the College of Forestry at OSU

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We at Oregon State University's College of Forestry were asked to produce a statewide map of wildfire exposure to structures across Oregon based on climate, weather, fuels and topography. Other rules defining how the Wildland Urban Interface and exposure map were to be created and defined came from a Rules Advisory Committee including a diverse group of individuals representing various levels of governance and interest groups over a seven month period. We faithfully executed this task given the legislation and rules set forth.

Given the aggressive timeline of SB 762, we collaborated with Pyrologix LLC, a leading fire modeling company, the United States Forest Service regional fire behavior analysts, Oregon

Department of Forestry analysts, and other fire behavior specialists and scientists to calibrate these inputs based on experiential knowledge and best available science.

The primary purpose of the map is to (a) Ensure the most vulnerable locations threatened by wildfire are prioritized for fire adaptation and mitigation investments, so limited resources can be most prudently deployed to protect lives and homes, and (b) Identify where new defensible space standards and home hardening building codes will apply to be used by the Oregon State Fire Marshall and the Building Codes Division to areas in Oregon of highest wildfire exposure within the built environment.

SB 762 provides a logical process for building resilience in Oregon that begins with the exposure map, but is followed by OSFM’s site visits or county inspections on new construction.

The process also included an opportunity for revisions to the exposure map based on the established appeal’s process.

Despite being truncated in time, we did receive some constructive feedback and are working with our fire modeling experts to implement the following revisions:

1. We came to the realization that “wildfire risk map” was not the most appropriate label—that the mapping looks at zones of exposure to catastrophic wildfire more than it does the risk present on any particular property.
2. We worked with the fire modeling experts to adjust fuel loadings within croplands specifically, reflecting feedback

we received and site visits conducted. This impacts both burn probability and fire intensity.

3. We have an irrigated lands dataset based on the published IrrMapper analysis. We consider this best available science that is also being used by Oregon's Water Resources Department for other purposes. However, the reason we did not give irrigated lands an automatic reduction in wildfire exposure was to allow the Building Code Division and Department of Land Conservation and Development to look across Oregon as if it were developed, in support of decisions about future development. We have this information to integrate into the map, but caution that it is accounting for a mitigation action that may be ephemeral and does impact BCD and DLCDC needs (croplands may be allowed to develop without managing the home ignition zone despite their exposure being higher once developed).
4. We continue to evaluate the appropriateness of changing exposure classes in adjacent tax lots. This is difficult as four exposure classes are required and determined based on exposure across an entire tax lot. Many adjacent properties must have different exposure classes, otherwise all of Oregon will have one rating. There are likely instances where this difference is not an accurate representation, but how best to address this without impacting where it is correct, is a delicate balance.
5. We are preparing improved summary data provided via the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer as some data appeared

to be missing or incorrect in the property summaries and notification letters.

6. We are trying to find a better way to identify the addresses of the properties that will be notified of their high exposure rating. The available tax lot dataset is not very well maintained or attributed.
7. Data sharing remains a point of contention and we hope that this can be resolved before the next map is released.
8. We continue to work with Governor's Office on any proposed legislative changes to SB 762 and await any that may be enacted so that we can produce the next map in accordance with the law.

We are prepared to support the five primary state agencies in this education plan and will help develop and implement an operational plan as needed. We would like to have additional time to complete the map improvements. We ask for this extension because of two primary reasons:

- 1) There are currently seven new bills related to SB 762 that may be considered this legislative session. It only makes sense to wait to see what the outcomes of these bills are prior to completing revisions to the maps.
- 2) The Wildfire Program Director's catalogue of future possibilities that outlines some of the changes that are proposed for this next iteration of the map.

Thank you.