

## SB 509 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### Senate Committee On Natural Resources

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**Meeting Dates:** 2/6

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Department of Forestry to study community-based programs for reducing wildfire risk, and to submit a report to the natural resources-related interim legislative committees by September 15, 2024.

*FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued*

*REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued*

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Directs the State Fire Marshal (SFM) to administer a **community risk reduction program** that includes a neighborhood protection cooperative program, a home hardening assistance program, a need-based community risk reduction grant program, and to implement additional miscellaneous provisions related to a centralized, user-friendly public website, an interagency data collection system, and reporting requirements. Directs the SFM to establish a **neighborhood protection cooperative program** to coordinate, streamline, and improve Oregon programs that assist with reducing wildfire risk around buildings and neighborhoods, through on-site consultations and cooperative practices. Requires the SFM to designate best practices related to wildfire risk and defensible space; to develop and implement a training curriculum for on-site consultants to visit properties and recommend best practices; to adopt rules for implementation with substantial public input including public hearings in at least six high wildfire exposure communities and collaboration with specified groups; and to take steps to coordinate similar federal, state, and local programs to optimize efficiency and cost-effectiveness of wildfire risk reduction. Directs the SFM to establish a **home hardening assistance program and fund** to assist property owners with retrofitting and hardening of homes in areas with high exposure to catastrophic wildfire and in areas that have been exposed to wildfires. Requires the SFM to identify counties eligible for the program, to establish grant award criteria that counties must use to prioritize grant awards, and to provide moneys to counties to fund the home hardening grants. Authorizes the SFM to develop matching-fund, low-interest, or no-interest loan programs to assist with home hardening. Requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services to assist the SFM by creating a list of retrofits and materials or practices that reduce building vulnerability to fire, and to identify the cost-effectiveness of each. Requires grant administrators to submit three reports to the SFM. Directs the SFM to establish a **need-based community risk reduction grant program** to support individuals or municipalities to reduce wildfire risk. Requires the SFM to establish the grant procedures by rule, and authorizes the SFM to either administer the grants directly or to award grants to municipalities to administer. Directs the SFM to ensure a **central, user-friendly public website** clearly describes all programs, grant opportunities, and citizen input processes with the aim of maximizing convenience for persons seeking relevant information and services across multiple agencies and organizations. Specifies website content requirements. Directs SFM to establish an **interagency data collection system** to enable cooperation on wildfire risk reduction investments under the community risk reduction program. Directs the SFM to **submit reports on the community risk reduction program** on December 1, 2023, September 1, 2024, and September 1, 2025 to the Governor, State Wildfire Programs Director, Wildfire Programs Advisory Council, and wildfire-related legislative committees. Specifies report requirements. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Community wildfire risk reduction is commonly known as a process that helps communities identify their risks, develop a plan to reduce their risks, and strategically invest to reduce their occurrence and impact. The Oregon Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) created the Fire Adapted Oregon initiative following the enactment of Senate Bill 762 (2021) to engage in enhanced, data-driven community risk reduction work. OSFM currently has seven regional fire risk reduction specialists on staff who work with local partners to create and promote fire-adapted communities in Oregon.

Senate Bill 509 would direct the Oregon Department of Forestry to study community-based programs for reducing wildfire risk, and to submit a report to the natural resources-related interim legislative committees by September 15, 2024.