

SB 509 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Senate Committee On Natural Resources****Action Date:** 03/08/23**Action:** Do pass with amendments and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Engrossed.)**Vote:** 4-1-0-0**Yeas:** 4 - Golden, Prozanski, Smith DB, Taylor**Nays:** 1 - Girod**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Laura Kentnesse, LPRO Analyst**Meeting Dates:** 2/6, 3/8**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Establishes a **state policy** to assist communities and property owners in implementing wildfire risk reduction activities, to expand programs to serve wildfire-prone communities across the state as rapidly as resources allow, and to coordinate efforts across the state to optimize the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of wildfire-related programs. Directs the State Fire Marshal (SFM) to establish a **grant and incentive program** that supports communities, counties, and the public in reducing wildfire risk and that prioritizes need-based applicants. 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 in neighborhoods, through on-site consultations and cooperative practices. Requires the SFM to develop and implement a training curriculum for **on-site consultants**, and to assist with making on-site consultants available to property owners. Requires the SFM to adopt rules, hold public hearings in at least six high wildfire exposure communities, identify opportunities for collaboration or coordination with state agencies that have programs and personnel focused on community wildfire prevention, and prioritize collaborating with specified groups for rulemaking and program implementation. 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 the SFM, in consultation with state agencies, counties, community organizations, fire service providers, and other partners, to develop a **20-year strategic plan** that prioritizes fire resiliency and building fire-adapted communities. Directs the SFM to establish an **interagency data collection system** to enable cooperation on wildfire risk reduction investments under the community risk reduction program. Specifies additional contents for existing **biannual SFM reports**. **Appropriates \$10 million** to the SFM through the Community Risk Reduction Fund for the grant and incentive program. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- State support for Oregonians taking action to protect their homes and communities
- Collaboration between the State Fire Marshal, Oregon Department of Forestry, and other partners to conduct community-level preventative work
- Clarity for public regarding available programs, citizen input opportunities, and other community resiliency information
- Senate Bill 762 (2021) Community Risk Reduction Program
- Relationship between this Act and existing defensible space requirements
- Grants to the public for voluntary neighborhood-level resilience
- Challenges nearby and adjacent federal lands pose to effective community risk reduction

SB 509 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021, the Legislative Assembly enacted Senate Bill 762, which directed the State Fire Marshal (SFM) to establish a Community Risk Reduction Program for Oregon. The program was designed to help communities identify their risks, develop a plan to reduce those risks, and strategically invest to reduce wildfire occurrence and impact. As part of the program implementation, the SFM created the Fire Adapted Oregon initiative to engage in enhanced, data-driven community risk reduction work. The SFM has hired seven regional fire risk reduction specialists to work with local partners to create and promote fire-adapted communities in Oregon, and has distributed a first round of grant moneys to schools and hospitals for vegetation management in close proximity to buildings and infrastructure.

Senate Bill 509 A would direct the State Fire Marshal to establish a \$10 million grant and incentive program, neighborhood protection cooperative program, user-friendly public website, 20-year strategic plan, and interagency data collection system.