

SB 509, Wildfire

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee:

While I am in favor of programs to aid Oregon citizens in defending their properties from wildfire, the elephant in the room has still not been addressed, and until it is, there will be push back from property owners.

THE ELEPHANT: More than 90% of the acres burnt in Oregon start on land owned by government, not individual property owners. Until you mandate the Federal and State governments to properly maintain land under their (and your) control in order to reduce fire hazards, you have no right to mandate individual property owners to alter their properties under threat of penalties, fines, intrusive inspections, coercion, etc. **YOUR HYPOCRISY IS EVIDENT TO ALL BUT YOURSELVES.**

We have already performed Firewise improvements to our property. And yet we are still classified as Extreme. Why? Because across the creek from us and across the road and up the hill on the other side is BLM land which has been untouched for who knows how long, and is ripe for a devastating lightning started fire, **NO MATTER WHAT WE DO ON OUR OWN PROPERTY.**

We have lived here long enough to remember when the forest roads were open and we could get firewood permits to cut madrone and oak to thin the forests of fast and hot burning wood, helping to reduce local wildfire risk. Now the roads have been destroyed and barricaded and the underbrush and hot burning trees are free to grow unhindered, threatening our homes in case of local lightening strikes. And no one can get to the forested area to put out the fires if they start. Whose idea was that? Someone not too bright, I would say.

Mr. Glenn Casamassa, Regional Forester, United States Forest Service, recently provided testimony before the Senate Natural Resources Committee essentially saying that Acts already in place due to lawsuits from environmentalist groups are the reason there is no longer fire threat suppression activity on Federal Land. Coupled with increased lightening strikes and inability to get to the endangered land to put out fires is the reason the fires get out of control. How many times have we heard stories of local fire departments getting close to containing a fire before the Federal Fire Agencies show up and force them to stand down, while they create a much larger "containment circle" and let it burn? Again, the **HYPROCRISY** screams at the rest of us. The so called environmentalists are responsible for the increasingly devastating destruction of the forests they purport to protect.

Please remove the mandates remaining in Sections 10 and 11, even if you have to change the ORS, until government's own house is in order.

Jean M. Hart
Rogue River