



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 6, 2023

To: Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod and Members of the Committee
Senate Committee on Natural Resources

Email: snr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: **SB 509 with -1 Amendment - Community Programs for Reducing Wildfire Risk - Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the 19 statewide land use goals and support policies that promote both conservation and development of land as a natural resource. The League began its study of land use back in 1959. We support both Goals 3 and 4, protecting our agricultural and forest lands, Goal 7, natural hazards, and Goal 14 that focuses on complete communities. In 2021 our members adopted positions on Forestry to clarify issues specifically around forestry.

We believe that one of government's most important roles is protecting the public's health and safety. It is with this background that **we support SB 509 with the proposed -1 amendment**. Because we realize that this bill may have additional amendments, we may weigh in again as the bill moves to what we believe will be a work session and assumed movement to Ways and Means for funding.

In 2020 we provided [testimony](#) on [SB 1536](#) and in 2021 we provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 248-1](#). That bill was not amended, but [SB 762](#) eventually passed with a comprehensive set of strategies to address wildfire concerns and provided 11 agencies with instructions and funding to work toward helping make our communities more safe while also addressing the health of our forests.

We followed the rulemaking by the Oregon Dept. of Forestry as they engaged a broad group of Oregonians in implementing the bill. We are hopeful that a new Wildfire Exposure Map can be created that will help landowners understand their exposure to wildfire. We also support more funding for agencies to help landowners address that exposure. It is a public safety issue and will help reduce costs not only to those landowners, but also to the budget of Oregon. Oregon's firefighters will also benefit from this work.

The League has advocated for helping our neighbors who suffered losses, especially advocating for replacing infrastructure for water and sewer, as well as for a new well water fund and additional monies for on-site septic repair and replacement for rural residents.

We encourage the committee to continue to work on SB 509 to find consensus as was done with SB 762 so we can all advocate for state funding to implement the strategies agreed upon. League members live around the state. Some were affected by the significant wildfire events in the last few years. We are willing to continue to work with others to move this bill forward to address the many issues around wildfire and protection of Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Rebecca Gladstone
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