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February 6, 2023

Senator Jeff Golden, Chair, and Members
Senate Committee on Natural Resources
State Capitol, OR

Re: SB 509, and -1 amendment

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 509, including the -1 amendment. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. I serve as a member of the Wildfire Programs Advisory Council, created by the 2021 legislature under SB 762.

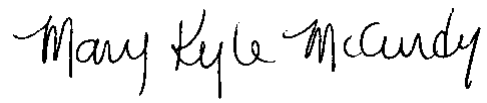
Senate Bill 509 and the -1 amendment continue, improve, and expand upon the strong programs provided for in SB 762, which established Oregon's comprehensive wildfire resilience and preparedness program. The -1 amendment provides for:

- better coordination and alignment of state agencies and other entities to support wildfire risk reduction
- establishing neighborhood risk reduction programs to provide training, grants, and investments in community defensible space and home hardening
- establishing the Home Hardening Assistance Fund, to assist with retrofitting and hardening homes in areas with high wildfire risk and in areas that have been exposed to wildfires
- focusing those investments on those with higher vulnerabilities and lower incomes
- expanding incentives for home hardening
- defining best practices for mitigation actions
- creating opportunities for significant federal matching funds
- establishing a central, user-friendly, one-stop website where Oregonians can access information on grants, policies, and other programs

1000 Friends is especially supportive of focusing funding on those with high social vulnerabilities and lower incomes, and on creating the one-stop website where Oregonians can access information and assistance for making their property and community more wildfire prepared.

We urge your support of SB 509, with the -1 amendment. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director