

Submitter: Shelia Megson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB752

Thank you for reading my written testimony instead of my planned longer verbal presentation. Please keep in mind that the following was written in a format for which I speak instead of a written presentation.

Good Morning Chair Golden and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources. I am Shelia Megson, and I testify today as an Oregon Resident with my extremely summarized story of personal experience.

Over a decade ago, I moved to the Curry Coast pre-diagnosed with COPD due to foreign material lodged into my lungs from an old carpet in a rental I had in another state. The marvelous air quality here helped immensely, and I showed great improvement in my condition. Things were looking great as I could physically do anything needed.

Then, we had the Chetco Bar Fire. This fire started small. It was reported and assests were on location fighting the blaze. People in my area were listening to the radio transmissions as this all happened. Then the firefighters were told by the feds to vacate the area. It then spread many days to finally burning close to 200,000 acres much of which on the same area as the past Biscuit fire. The non-management of the Biscuit fire remediation allowed it to even further fuel this enormous fire. Smoke was thick everywhere.

With my condition, I did anything I could think of to stop my exposure. But, It didn't work and I ended up in the hospital for many days. I took a dramatic downturn in my health and have been in the hospital numerous times. The impact of this one fire season has never let my lungs heal. Now, I cannot even go up the stairs in my own house without stopping at the first counter I can use to lean on for a couple of minutes to recuperate. I can no longer garden, walk to the mailbox, or even do our monthly grocery shopping without serious concerns. I require a nebulizer multiple times a day and an oxygen concentrator while I sleep even in my limited physical state.

I am extremely lucky that I have employment that allows me to do all of my work on computer and do not have to travel any longer. Without it, I would easily be on disability. But that's just it – I'm lucky in everything here in comparison to most that deal with wildfire smoke. Our smoke right on the coast was horrible and it impacted my health dramatically for the rest of my life. But, I cannot begin to imagine the negative health effects for people in the valley - where the smoke from fires sits on

top of all those people for weeks at a time.

The Oregon Legislature has tackled many tough tasks for the victims of wildfire such as emergency housing and lifting of some restrictions temporarily. We've entertained bills that would hopefully reduce fire and increase forest management. Our State Agencies such as DEQ, OHA, ODF, Parks, DLCD have spent untold millions, maybe even billions, concerning wildfire and health impacts. I cannot begin to count how many problems I have seen you tackle on the subject, but we've forgotten one. That is to hold those responsible for drastically effecting our health responsible. I am not aware of any action taken by the DOJ concerning the health effects to our residents from these fires on federal lands. I and the rest of Oregon residents BEG you help us that have had our health effected and and hold them responsible. Please Pass SB752.