



March 27, 2023

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, Members of the Committee. For the record my name is Branden Pursinger and I am the Legislative Affairs Manager for Natural Resource related issues with the Association of Oregon Counties.

I am here today in Support of SB 80 and the -2 amendments.

In 2021, SB 762 tasked the Department of Forestry to develop and maintain a wildfire risk map and tasked the Department and OSU to collaborate with local governments and others to achieve that purpose. It also said that the department shall consult and cooperate with counties. These things did not occur, so with SB 80 making adjustments to SB 762 I worked with the Department of Forestry, Chair Golden, Doug Grafe, and the Chair of the Wildfire Council – Mark Bennett to seek changes and establish in statute, a partnership with the Department for creating the wildfire map 2.0.

These adjustments can be found in the community engagement portion of the amendment. The community engagement states that the map cannot consist of just delivering information in a top-down manner and must be done in coordination with counties.

In addition to the community engagement with the public, before the map is released for public comment the department shall meet with County Commissioners, County Planners and other County employees in 8 in-person meetings throughout the state to ensure the proper zone mapping occurs in every county.

AOC has 8 geographic districts and we hold meetings after the Legislative session to discuss bills that have passed and other issues that have come up regionally. The Department will be invited to attend these meetings and engage one on one with those that understand these regions of the state better than any other, county planners, commissioners, and county emergency management officials. Then, once the map is released for public comment, counties will have one additional opportunity to discuss concerns and potential changes to the map.

Oregon's counties are partners in many efforts and we want to be. We are ready to engage with the Department to help create a Wildfire Zone Map that is best for all the citizens of Oregon.

The Association of Oregon Counties is also supportive of the Wildfire Home Preparedness Program established in Section 9 of the amendment. No one wants to see their communities burn in a wildfire and we are ready and able to assist the State Fire Marshal in administering the program.

AOC urges the passage of SB 80.

Thank you and I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

Branden Pursinger  
Legislative Affairs Manager for Natural Resources  
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