

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Item 41: Department of Forestry 2025 Fire Season

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Natural Resources Subcommittee
Carrier: Senator Neron Misslin

The Natural Resources Subcommittee heard a request from the Department of Forestry on the 2025 fire season.

Oregon's 2025 fire season was the second most costly in the past 10 years; however, 94% of fires were held to 10 acres or less, and the total acres burned statewide were less than half of the 10-year average. The season's expense was driven by the cost of personnel and equipment necessary to keep fires small. The total large fire cost for the 2025 fire season was \$129.9 million, which is about 35% higher than the 10-year average.

Net large fire costs are the state's remaining costs after Federal Emergency Management Agency Fire Management Assistance grants, recoveries, and cost shares are subtracted from the season's gross costs. The 2025 net large fire costs totaled \$57.3 million, which is about 21% above the 10-year average. Fire severity costs, which include contracted air support, totaled \$12.2 million. The agency reported on private losses from wildfires of 1,000 acres or more, as per statute, and five fires in 2025 met the criteria, leading to estimated losses of grazing lands worth approximately \$2.1 million and forestland worth approximately \$1.2 million. There were 63 residences and 141 other structures lost this season.

The Natural Resources Subcommittee recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means acknowledge receipt of the reports and appropriate \$57,295,787 General Fund for 2025 fire season net large fire costs, with a corresponding decrease in the special purpose appropriation made to the Emergency Board for natural disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery; appropriate \$12,167,370 General Fund for fire severity costs, with a corresponding decrease in the special purpose appropriation made to the Emergency Board for fire protection expenses; and increase Other Funds expenditure limitation by \$73,600,000 for processing payments associated with the 2025 fire season for the Department of Forestry in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2026 legislative session.