ANALYSIS

Item 52: Department of Forestry

Community Wildfire Defense

Analyst: April McDonald

Request: Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation for the Department of Forestry, Fire Protection, by $730,349 to implement wildfire resiliency and fuels reduction projects in Linn and Wallowa Counties.

Analysis: The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service provides competitive grant funding through the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program to help communities plan for and reduce wildfire risk. The program prioritizes proposals in areas identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential, are low income, or have been impacted by a severe disaster within the previous 10 years that increased wildfire risk. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) will act as a subrecipient of $730,349 in awarded CWDG funds. A total of $630,349 is anticipated from Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance, a special district in Linn County, and $100,000 is anticipated from Wallowa Resources, a nonprofit organization focused on bettering the economy and landscape in Wallowa County.

ODF is working with Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance to provide risk reduction technical assistance to communities, including developing new Firewise USA sites, delivering Smokey Bear programs to local schools, and planning fuel reduction projects throughout Linn County. Firewise USA sites are community groups overseen by a board including local fire and forestry experts that complete yearly fuel mitigation work and educational events to lower wildfire risk.

ODF is also working with Wallowa Resources to coordinate cistern and dry hydrant installation, as well as technical assistance to landowners and partners as Wallowa County implements fire resiliency projects.

The agency requests an increase of $730,349 in Other Funds expenditure limitation to implement the Community Wildfire Defense Grant activities in Linn and Wallowa Counties. There is no match requirement, and no additional staff are needed.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board increase Other Funds expenditure limitation for the Department of Forestry, Fire Protection, by $730,349 to implement wildfire resiliency and fuels reduction projects in Linn and Wallowa Counties.

Request: Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation by $730,349 for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant award.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Department of Forestry (ODF) has been awarded a grant of $730,349 from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Community Wildfire Defense Grant. The funding will support a Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance risk reduction technical assistance project to develop new Firewise Communities, deliver Smokey Bear programs to local schools, and support the planning of fuel reduction projects in Linn County. ODF will also use the funding to work with Wallowa Resources, who will coordinate cistern and dry hydrant installation and offer technical assistance to landowners and partners. ODF will be working with Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance and Wallowa Resources as a sub-recipient on both projects. The grant application was approved in 2022 and is the third round of funding received from the USFS.

Legal Reference: Increase the Other Funds expenditure limitation established by chapter 609, section 2(2), Oregon Laws 2025, for the Department of Forestry, fire protection, by $730,349 for the 2025-27 biennium.

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Forestry
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August 6, 2026

The Honorable Senator Rob Wagner, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Julie Fahey, Co-Chair
Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Replacement Letter Department of Forestry CWDG Request

Dear Senator Wager and Representative Fahey:

Nature of the Request
The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) respectfully requests permission to appear before the Emergency Board at its September 2026 meeting for the purposes of:

1. Requests an increase in Other Funds limitation in the amount of $730,349 associated with the Round 3 USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program funds awarded in Linn and Wallowa counties.

Agency Action
This request is a direct result of federally awarded funds from the Community Wildfire Defense Grant, round 3. ODF is working with Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance as a subrecipient to provide risk reduction technical assistance including developing new Firewise Communities, delivering Smokey Bear programs to local schools and planning fuel reduction projects in Linn County. ODF has also partnered as a subrecipient with Wallowa Resources and will coordinate cistern and dry hydrant installation and offer technical assistance to landowners and partners as Wallowa County implements their fire resiliency project.

Funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program complements ODF's current fuels treatment work and augment existing wildland fuels mitigation programs, including the federally funded Western States Fire Managers and Community Assistance programs, as well as the state-funded Landscape Resilience and Small Forestland Grant programs.

The CWDG Program focuses on wildfire preparedness, wildland fuel management, and wildfire science. It supports fuel treatments designed to reduce wildfire risk and mitigate potential damage to millions of acres near the wildland–urban interface and critical watersheds that supply drinking water. This work directly aligns with ODF's mission to protect, manage, and promote the stewardship of Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic, and community sustainability.

Action Requested

ODF respectfully requests that the Emergency Board:

1. Allocate an additional $730,349 in Other Funds expenditure limitation to the Fire Protection Division for the USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program awards in Linn and Wallowa Counties.

Legislation Affected

SB 5521, Chapter 609, Section 2(2), Oregon Laws 2025

Sincerely,

Kacey KC
State Forester
Oregon Department of Forestry