



Firebrand Resiliency Collective has a mission to support community solutions for long-term recovery, resilience, and preparedness in the face of natural disasters.

Tucker Teutsch III, Executive Director | tucker@firebrandcollective.org | 503.484.6793

RE: Written Testimony in Support of SB 1187—"Make Polluters Pay" Act

Submitted by: Tucker Teutsch III, Executive Director, Firebrand Resiliency Collective

Date: April 7, 2025

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tucker Teutsch, and I serve as Executive Director of the Firebrand Resiliency Collective (FRC). We are a nonprofit organization based in Southern Oregon, serving Jackson and Josephine Counties at the intersection of wildfire recovery, climate resilience, and community preparedness. Climate change and climate-related disasters come in many forms, but in Oregon, wildfire is the most visible and immediate expression of this crisis.

We strongly support Senate Bill 1187 because it corrects a long-standing imbalance—shifting the cost of climate change off of frontline communities and onto those whose extractive practices have helped create the crisis.

Our work at FRC prioritizes those most at risk—seniors, low-income households, fire survivors, rural landowners, and residents of manufactured home parks—many of whom are still recovering from the 2020 Almeda and South Obenchain Fires. Currently, the climate cost burden is unfairly distributed: Our rural and working-class communities are footing the bill for disasters driven by fossil fuel emissions, and doing so with limited tools. Meanwhile, the industries profiting from this risk carry no obligation to contribute to solutions. That imbalance is neither sustainable nor just.

We need to build local capacity and advance climate justice. This bill is not just about recovering costs—it's about building capacity for the long haul. SB1187 proposes a 30% allocation to the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) for wildfire resilience and recovery, and 40% to environmental justice communities, such as those I serve in Talent, Phoenix, and along the Bear Creek Corridor—places still rebuilding nearly five years after the fires.

These funds can close the gap between awareness and action—and allow us to scale our work to meet the moment. At FRC, our Ready NOW (Neighborhoods Organized for Wildfire) program creates Fire Adapted Communities by educating residents and supporting direct mitigation efforts—bark mulch replacement, ember-resistant vent retrofits, and Firewise USA community formation.

But this work is constrained by inconsistent public funding, and most recently by an illegal federal funding freeze that now threatens more than 60% of our organizational budget. To truly scale this work and sustain momentum, we need durable, state-level investment that can leverage homeowner and private-sector participation. SB 1187 offers exactly that.

This bill can help balance our investments in adaptation. Under the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, mitigation requires three pillars:

1. Resilient Landscapes
2. Safe and Effective Response
3. Fire Adapted Communities

While the first two have seen substantial public investment, the third—community action—remains underfunded. Yet, events like the Almeda Fire and wind-driven fires across California show us that no amount of suppression or fuels treatment can substitute for community-level mitigation.

SB1187, along with other bills before you this session, can help balance our investments across all three pillars and ensure that the people doing the work to lower risk get the resources they need. I support the allocations to OSFM and OEM to collaborate with trusted local partners—including Firebrand—to bring this vision to life.

I also want to commend the bill's sponsors for their effort to not only create new programs but to understand the real impact of fossil fuels—both on climate disasters and on the financial burden those disasters place on Oregon. This is about more than numbers; it's about changing systems that externalize cost while internalizing profit.

That said, we already know this much: the wildfire insurance crisis is here. Insurers are pulling out. Premiums are spiking. Banks are hesitating to underwrite mortgages in fire-prone areas. SB1187 helps us stabilize these markets by investing in community-driven mitigation that demonstrably reduces risk—both in practice and in policy. And it does so in the places Oregonians live, work, recreate, and rely on for clean water and air—our forests and rural communities.

This is a quintessential quid pro quo. Fossil fuel companies helped drive the risks we now face. It is fair—and economically rational—that they help fund the solutions. In doing so, they can support regional adaptation, insurance stability, and long-term resilience—safeguarding the very economies in which they continue to operate.

In conclusion, SB1187 is practical, equitable, and future-facing. It empowers local solutions, addresses systemic imbalances, and helps Oregonians adapt to the climate

future we are already living. On behalf of Firebrand Resiliency Collective and the communities we serve, I urge your full support of this legislation.

Thank you,

Tucker Teutsch III

Executive Director, Firebrand Resiliency Collective

tucker@firebrandcollective.org 503.484.6793