

Submitter: Sydney Nilan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or SB1541
Topic:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources & Wildfire Committee,

On behalf of myself, my friends and colleagues, and the communities we serve in Eastern Lane County, we urge you to support SB 1541 and the creation of a Climate Resilience Superfund. Our work is rooted in protecting people, land, and communities; and we know firsthand that wildfire protection is not just about emergency response. It is about prevention, preparation, and long-term stewardship.

Restoring forest health, reducing fuels, and helping communities prepare before fire season are some of the most effective ways to save lives, protect homes, and reduce suppression costs. Yet these proactive efforts are too often underfunded, fragmented, or out of reach for the communities that need them most. Worsening fire conditions have made every aspect of this work more dangerous and more complex. Longer fire seasons, extreme heat, and increasingly dry forests mean that fires spread faster, burn hotter, and threaten more people. In the communities of Lane County, we have seen how smoke, evacuations, infrastructure damage, and post-fire flooding disrupt daily life and strain local resources. At the same time, tight and uncertain wildfire budgets make it difficult to plan, hire, and sustain the skilled workforce needed to do this work well. Stewardship organizations, local governments, and fire-adapted community programs are often forced to operate year to year, knowing the risks are growing but without guaranteed funding to meet them. That uncertainty creates real stress and limits our ability to act proactively instead of reactively.

SB 1541 offers a path forward. By requiring the largest out-of-state fossil fuel polluters to help pay for mitigation, resilience, and recovery, this bill aligns responsibility with impact. It helps ensure that firefighters, local governments, nonprofits, and taxpayers are not left to shoulder the full burden of climate-driven wildfire costs alone — and that prevention and preparedness can finally be funded at the scale the moment demands. Wildfire prevention saves lives. Climate accountability makes it possible. We respectfully ask you to support SB 1541 and take meaningful action to protect Oregon's communities, landscapes, and future.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.