

**Testimony Submitted by
Chris Coughlin, Federal Policy Director
Oregon Consumer Justice
To the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire**

February 10, 2026

Regarding: Support for SB 1504

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Oregon Consumer Justice in support of SB 1504.

Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ) envisions a vibrant future where all Oregonians live with dignity and abundance and experience health, joy, and economic opportunity. We work collaboratively across policy and advocacy, community engagement, and the law, to realize a more just and equitable Oregon where people come first. For too long, flawed systems and policies have stood in the way of this reality, with communities of color most often experiencing significant harm. Informed by consumer insights, OCJ works to make financial and business transactions reliably safe and supports Oregonians in knowing and exercising their consumer rights.

Homeowners insurance is a fundamental, and often mandatory, purchase for Oregonians to maintain household stability and recovery, especially as climate-driven disasters become more frequent and severe. When insurance companies don't act transparently, they undermine the trust that Oregonians have invested in both their insurer and the service they were promised. Consumers need access to adequate and affordable insurance, and they need to know that when they file a valid claim, benefits will be delivered in full and within a reasonable timeframe.

At OCJ, we believe consumers deserve transparency, fairness, and shared responsibility in the insurance system. Homeowners want to protect their homes and communities by receiving clear information about the actions they can take to actually reduce risk and help coverage remain accessible.

We will continue to see extreme weather events nationwide and a growing wildfire threat across Oregon. Recent data from the Consumer Federation of America’s report “Overburdened: The Dramatic Increase in Homeowners Insurance Premiums and its Impacts on American Homeowners”¹ shows that in one-third of ZIP codes nationwide, premiums rose by more than 30%. In comparison, Oregon homeowners experienced a 27% increase. As these premiums rise, consumers often take on more risk by accepting higher deductibles, weaker coverage, and subpar policies from insurers of last resort. Some homeowners, particularly those without a mortgage, report opting out of insurance altogether because it has become unaffordable. A lack of access to reasonable insurance leaves families, communities, and the broader economy more vulnerable when natural disasters strike.

SB 1540 offers a balanced and uniform framework that promotes transparency, accountability, and action. The bill would require insurers to either use a defined risk model that accounts for property-level or community-wide mitigation efforts, or to provide premium discounts tied to those actions. SB 1540 includes strong consumer-facing protections, such as timely notices written in plain language and clear information posted on insurers’ websites, so that homeowners can understand their risk, compare options, and make informed decisions. This clarity means consumers can confidently invest in mitigation measures that increase choice and improve safety, while helping to stabilize insurance costs.

Oregonians need access to affordable homeowners’ insurance. SB 1540 is an essential step toward a more transparent and fair insurance system that supports prevention, rewards mitigation, and keeps consumers protected. We look forward to seeing the amendment that aligns this bill with the legislative work underway in the State of Washington and appreciate all the work being done to draft the amendment on a short timeline. Passing SB 1540 will help create shared responsibility among insurers, homeowners, local governments, and policymakers to ensure that risk reduction is recognized, rewarded, and clearly communicated.

Thank you for your consideration and your service in building the future that Oregonians deserve.

¹ <https://consumerfed.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/OverburdenedReport.pdf>

