



Oregon Association of
Conservation Districts

March 11, 2019

To: House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
hvet.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

From: The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: Support for HB 2373, Using Oregon Department of Forestry Resources for Timely Control of Wildfires on Federal Land

To Chair Evans and Members of the Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness,

I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts to express support for HB 2373, allowing the State Forester to use wildfire suppression resources on federal lands in Oregon. OACD serves and represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as nonprofit, federal, and state partners like the Oregon Department of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service. Wildfire is a significant threat to our natural resources and public wellbeing, and Districts have been deeply involved in efforts to mitigate and recover from wildfires. Wasco SWCD, for instance, manages a large grant to work with local, state and federal partners to restore the nearly 204,000 acres that burned in the devastating 2018 fires in Wasco County. **HB 2373 would protect Oregon's forests, air quality, and communities by supporting timely and efficient response to wildfires within the state.**

Approximately 25% of Oregon's area, amounting to 16 million acres, is federal forestland, and an additional 15.7 million acres of our state are managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The ability to respond to wildfires on this land is crucial to the fire resiliency of our state not only because of the direct impacts to those lands, but also because wildfire doesn't respect boundaries. Fires on federal land can quickly grow and spread onto neighboring state and private lands, threatening not only natural resources but also human health and safety, if the fires are not addressed quickly by federal entities. Allowing the Oregon State Forester to use wildfire suppression personnel, equipment, and services on federal lands would improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which we prevent and control wildfires. **HB 2373 would enable the State Forester to better respond to wildfires before they grow to dangerous size and intensity, even if the fire starts on federal land.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB 2373 and the importance of timely, efficient wildfire response in our state. **We encourage you to pass HB 2373 to protect our natural resources and communities from wildfires.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Freitas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anna" and last name "Freitas" clearly distinguishable.

Anna H. Freitas
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