

**Written Testimony of Susan Jane M. Brown, Western Environmental Law Center**

**Oregon Senate Interim Committee On Wildfire Prevention and Recovery**

**Public Hearing and Work Session: Senate Bill 1514**

**Monday, February 10, 2020**

**1 p.m.**

Chairman Golden, Vice-Chair Minority Leader Baertschiger, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 1514, requiring the Oregon Department of Forestry to establish demonstration projects for reducing wildfire risk on forestlands and rangelands.

My name is Susan Jane M. Brown, and I am the Public Lands Director and Staff Attorney for the Western Environmental Law Center (WELC). We are based in Eugene, Oregon, with offices in Portland and Bend, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; Taos and Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Helena, Montana. WELC uses the power of the law to defend and protect the American West's treasured landscapes, iconic wildlife, and rural communities. We combine our legal skills with sound conservation biology and environmental science to address major environmental issues in the West in the most strategic and effective manner. WELC works at the national, regional, state, and local levels and in all three branches of government. We integrate national policies and regional perspective with the local knowledge of our 150+ partner groups to implement smart and appropriate place-based solutions.

The Western Environmental Law Center is also deeply engaged in collaborative forest conservation in eastern Oregon, working closely with the Blue Mountains Forest Partners and Harney County Restoration Collaborative on the Malheur National Forest, the Ochoco Forest Collaborative on the Ochoco National Forest, the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project on the Deschutes National Forest, and the Northern Blues Forest Collaborative on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

WELC supports SB 1514 with the -3 amendment. We believe that targeted, science-based risk-reduction projects can reduce wildfire risk around homes and communities, which should be the priority for state investment. In addition, landscape-scale forest restoration is also needed in many ecosystems to restore proper ecological function of degraded watersheds. SB 1514 will meet both objectives.

We remain concerned, however, about whether the Oregon Department of Forestry is sufficiently equipped to meet the modern challenges of fire risk reduction and forest restoration in our State, particularly in a climate-constrained world. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Interim Committee on Wildfire Prevention and Recovery to reimagine and reform the Department.

Thank you for the opportunity for the Western Environmental Law Center to share our perspective with the Interim Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Jane B". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "S" and a stylized "B" at the end.

Susan Jane M. Brown, Public Lands Director & Staff Attorney  
Western Environmental Law Center  
4107 NE Couch Street  
Portland, OR. 97232  
Ph: 503-914-1323  
Cell: 503-680-5513  
[brown@westernlaw.org](mailto:brown@westernlaw.org)  
[www.westernlaw.org](http://www.westernlaw.org)