

The Honorable Senator Taylor and Representative Reardon
JWM Subcommittee on Natural Resources
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310

May 17, 2021

Thank you, Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon, and committee members for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 5518. My name is Brennan Garrelts and I am a forester for Lone Rock Resources based out of Roseburg. Over the course of my nearly 20-year forestry career, in which I have worked both for the Bureau of Land Management and Private Working Forestland Owners, I have spent over 15-seasons as a wildland firefighter combatting wildfires. Today, one of my job duties includes managing Lone Rock's Fire Preparedness and Suppression program which has worked side-by-side with ODF and association firefighters as part of Oregon's Complete and Coordinated firefighting force since our company founding 70 years ago.

My testimony today is focused on the proposed shift in admin prorated. I want to start by saying Oregon's Legislature has a long, proud history of promoting Public-Private Partnerships; ODF's complete and coordinated fire-fighting system should be held as one of the premiere examples of this. ODF's system was built with a recognition that when combined, landowners and ODF can provide benefits to all Oregonians that exceed what any of the parties could accomplish on their own. The admin pro-rate was established to recognize the invaluable contribution that private landowners, like Lone Rock, provide to protect Oregon from destructive wildfires.

I want to provide some context of how landowners contribute to the system. As I do, please bear in mind that 1) Lone Rock is not unique, there are countless other landowners, both small and large, that provide many of these same contributions to the system and 2) There are no direct reimbursement mechanisms for our contributions to the system; the admin pro-rate is the only way the state recognizes these contributions.

Lone Rock has over 30 highly-qualified over-head wildland firefighters. During a fire our foresters turn into fire-fighters and are out on the fireline planning and executing the dozer lines and other mechanical operations that are responsible stopping many of the large fires we have faced in the past 10-years. They also work with timber fallers, engines and hand crews. Nationally, these positions are in short supply and are responsible for keeping machine operators safe along with planning, verifying, and implementing the work on the ground. Each year Lone Rock trains our employees to ensure they are ready for the upcoming season – this is the same training that ODF's firefighters receive. During the Archie Creek Fire Lone Rock directed and implemented over 30 miles of fireline.

To support the system Lone Rock maintains a robust fire cache with the same fire hose, hardware and firefighting tools that ODF and the association's caches hold. Our fire cache also includes several fully equipped initial attack fire engines that sit parked and ready to deploy if the fire-bell rings. During the Archie Creek Fire as well as many fires before it, Lone Rock, along with other companies, supplied hose and equipment from our cache to support the fire-fighting efforts.

Several of our employees, including myself, sit on ODF and the association's boards helping plan and prepare for the upcoming season. To meet ODF's goal to catch 97% of all fires Lone Rock deploys our foresters during extreme fire danger or after lightning storms to scout for fires and be ready to respond if one should start.

What I've described here is just the tip of the iceberg of what forestland companies provide to the system. Suffice it to say that these investments are not cheap. The significant financial investments made by each company ensure that ODF has a far more robust 'fire department' than what shows up on ODF's staffing level and more importantly helps protect Oregon lands from fire *and* reduces the overall exposure to the General Fund from both preparedness and large fire cost.

Eliminating this public/private partnership without first performing your due diligence to determine its merits would be fiscally and politically irresponsible. It has been nearly 14 years since a 3rd party analysis was completed on the in-kind contribution that landowners provide. I encourage you to accept the prudent recommendations of the Earth Economics Wildfire Funding Study and convene an in-kind study before you make decisions to remove the admin prorated.

Thank you for your time consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Brennan Garrelts

Lone Rock Resources
Roseburg, Ore