

TO: Oregon Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
CHAIR: Senator Mark Meek
RE: SB 502A
Date: 5/31/2023
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Oregon Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for SB 502A to designate a permanent trust fund for wildfire programs; declaring an emergency; providing for revenue estimate modification that requires approval by a two-thirds majority.

Oregon wildfires will only increase with each degree in temperature through summer and late fall seasons. In 2022 there were 42 active wildfires that destroyed thousands of acres of land and homes. I worked with a nonprofit that served those displaced by wildfire and discovered a significant number of people rendered homeless. Moreover, homeowner insurance policies are now no longer covering households with heightened risk of wildfire thereby increasing the likelihood of longterm displacement and financial ruin.

Those who oppose measures to prepare and protect residents from natural emergencies fail to appreciate the long term damage caused by short budgets and big problems. The state legislature must begin realistically assessing regional needs and including the costs associated with wildfires into its budgets.

In short, I support SB 502A that establishes a responsible, long term funding source for addressing wildfires, which will only increase in frequency and damage over time.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Sincerely,

Aimee Sukol