

February 7, 2023

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

My name is Akash Singh and I am writing on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), a national organization that puts science into action with the goal of contributing to an equitable, sustainable, and healthy future. UCS is proud to be supported by more than 10,000 Oregonians, including over 500 professionals who are a part of our Science Network.

I write to you today in support of SB 509, an important piece of legislation that can expand our toolbox to mitigate and combat wildfires.

Climate change has increased the size, unpredictability, and severity of wildfires in recent years. The challenges of mitigating and managing wildfires have likewise grown, including the recognition that wildfires affect Oregonians in different parts of the state in disparate ways.

SB 509 directs the Oregon State Forestry Department to study community-based programs for reducing wildfire risk. In doing so, SB 509 can lay the foundations for policymakers and advocates to craft community-based wildfire risk reduction programs tailored to the needs of the communities in question.

I urge you to pass SB 509 without delay. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Akash Singh, JD  
Western States Policy Advocate  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
asingh@ucsusa.org