

ANALYSIS

Department of Forestry Fuels Management

Analyst: April McDonald

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of two federal grant application requests to the Bureau of Land Management in the total amount of \$1,200,000 over a three-year period for the management and reduction of wildfire fuels in high-risk, wildland-urban interface areas.

Analysis: On November 1, 2023, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released a funding opportunity aimed at reducing the risk and impact of catastrophic wildfires to communities in wildland urban interface areas through fuels management and wildfire prevention education for landowners. Eligible applicants include state, local, and tribal governments, as well as nonprofit organizations throughout Oregon and Washington. Awards ranging from \$20,000 to \$950,000 will be delivered as cooperative agreements without cost sharing or the requirement for matching funds. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) seeks retroactive approval to apply for a total of \$1.2 million, through two separate grant applications for the same federal opportunity. The Department has requested \$900,000 for efforts in ODF's Southwest Oregon District and \$300,000 for efforts in the South Cascades District. If awarded, the funding for both districts will be dedicated to expanding community capabilities for fuels management activities and fire education programs. ODF's resulting work in these districts will assist in creating resilient landscapes and communities in wildland urban interface areas and education and outreach programs that help create fire adapted communities and landscapes.

While there is no requirement for matching funds, it is strongly encouraged by BLM. Therefore, ODF's Southwest Office will be committing \$50,000 in the form of in-kind match, through defensible space fuel reduction activities funded by ODF's Small Forestland Grant (SFG) program. The SFG activities are on lands adjacent to the BLM lands intended to benefit from this grant.

The Department submitted a timely notification of its intent to apply for the grant in advance of the January 22, 2024 application deadline, and no additional funding or staff will be necessary to implement the grant.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Committee on Ways and Means approve the request.

Department of Forestry Filimoehala

Request: Retroactive authorization to apply for a grant of \$1,200,000 from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program for fuel management projects in the Southwest Oregon and South Cascade districts.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is requesting retroactive authorization to apply for a grant from the Bureau of Land Management for fuel reduction projects in the Southwest Oregon and South Cascade fire districts. The grant is made available through the Oregon/Washington Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance program, through BLM, which conducts a wide variety of active management vegetation treatments using mechanical, biological, and chemical tools, and prescribed fire to create fuel breaks that provide safe access for firefighters, reduce fuel loads by removing pinon-juniper and invasive species, and provide further reduction of fire risk near communities and targeted grazing.

ODF provided a 10-day notification of their intent to apply for the grant on January 5, 2024, and applied to the grant on January 24, 2024. Grant funds would support fuels management public outreach and education efforts in high-risk wildland-urban interface areas, specifically within the Southwest Oregon and South Cascades fire districts. The grant requires no matching funds, but ODF intends to utilize \$50,000 of in-kind staff support as part of the program. ODF does not anticipate the need for additional Federal Funds expenditure limitation or additional positions or FTE as a result of receiving the grant.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

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January 16, 2024

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Retroactive approval to apply for IIJA/IRA Bureau of Land Management
Oregon/Washington (ORWA) Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program**

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) respectfully requests retroactive approval to apply to the [Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington's \(ORWA\) Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program](#) which will be funded through the Infrastructure Improvement & Jobs Act (IIJA)/Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This grant opportunity provides funding to assist with fuels management and public outreach and education. The intended outcome of this proposal is to reduce the impacts of catastrophic wildfire in high-risk, wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas. ODF will utilize these funds to support these efforts in our Southwest Oregon and South Cascade Districts.

Agency Action

On November 1st, 2023 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Department of the Interior (DOI) announced a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the IIJA/IRA Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington (ORWA) Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program. ODF applied for this federal funding on the application due date of January 22, 2024 in the amount of \$1.2 million with \$900,000 going to support efforts in our Southwest Oregon District and \$300,000 to support efforts in our South Cascade District. Per the program notification no match is required, only strongly encouraged. However, the Southwest Office of ODF will be committing out of a 2023 Small Forestland Grant (SFG) award \$50,000 in the form of In-Kind Match. These are defensible space fuel reduction activities being funded out of the SFG and are adjacent to the planned BLM EA units.

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair

Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair

RE: Retroactive approval to apply for IIJA/IRA Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington (ORWA) Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program

January 16, 2024

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The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is committed to addressing significant disparities in forest health treatments and programs across Oregon. Resource disadvantaged communities suffer from air pollution and poor environmental health, often exacerbated by limited resources, lack of information, language barriers, and institutional biases. These barriers hinder their access to federal funding and participation in greening initiatives, leading to procedural injustice. To combat this, ODF is seeking funding to support organizations working in dis-invested communities and promote environmental and social equity. This initiative addresses the challenges posed by climate change, invasive species, disease, and drought impacted forests, and development pressures on Oregon's forests, while also expanding community capabilities, fuels management activities, and fire education programs.

Action Requested

ODF requests retroactive approval to apply for Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington (ORWA) Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program grants which will be funded through the Infrastructure Improvement & Jobs Act (IIJA)/Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in the amount totaling \$1.2 million (\$900,000 in Southwest Oregon District and \$300,000 in South Cascade District). No matching funds from the state are being requested nor does the department request any additional Federal Fund limitation or FTE.

Legislation Affected

No legislation affected.

Sincerely,



Cal Mukumoto
State Forester

c: Legislative Fiscal Office
Chief Financial Office
Board of Forestry
Governor's Office