



February 8, 2024

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, members of the Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee. My name is Branden Pursinger and I am the Natural Resources and Land Use Lobbyist for the Association of Oregon Counties.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the committee this morning regarding SB 1511 and the -1 Amendments. SB 1511 can be broken down into two separate pieces, the first would establish the neighborhood protection cooperative grant program at the Department of State Fire Marshal. The purpose of this grant program is to promote wildfire resilience within communities. The bill directs the Fire Marshal to work with local governments, fire districts and non-governmental organizations to achieve these goals.

The second, which is being replaced through the -1 amendment, establishes a timeline and plan for the Fire Marshal, Forestry Department, and the Insurance Commissioner at DCBS to create a homeowner insurance risk reduction certification program, and then require those agencies to produce a report regarding what actions were taken to identify actions that could be used to lower said insurance costs.

AOC is in support of both pieces of this bill. First, AOC has engaged in comprehensive wildfire policies for many sessions now and we recognize the need for thoughtful, effective, and regionally tailored solutions to the mitigation, suppression, and recovery of wildfires. This first portion of the bill continues these efforts. No one wants to see their communities catch fire, and anything we can do to help communities become wildfire resilient, the better.

Second, during the Senate Bill 80 Wildfire Map meetings ODF and AOC held during the fall, it was stated multiple times that individuals who take the time and do what is needed to reduce the risks of wildfire, should have those positive actions reflected in their insurance rates. Although counties are not responsible for insurance rates in this state, we greatly appreciate that this bill identifies mitigation actions that could be used to lower costs or better the terms of homeowner insurance policies.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee AOC is in support of SB 1511-1 and we encourage your support of this bill.

Thank you,

Branden Pursinger

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