

# Senate Bill 340

Sponsored by Senator SMITH DB (Pre-session filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: Tells an insurer in some cases not to raise the price of a policy of fire insurance by more than three percent each year or cancel the policy. The cases are if the policy holder lives near wild land or works at farming, logging, mining or similar work. (Flesch Readability Score: 62.6).

Prohibits an insurer from canceling fire insurance policies, or raising policy premiums by more than three percent, if an insured's property is located within the wildland-urban interface or the insured's primary employment or economic or business activity is farming or resource extraction. Specifies exceptions. Requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services to determine by rule how to measure employment or economic or business activity for the purposes of qualifying for limitations on cancellations and policy increases.

Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to fire insurance that covers properties at particular risk of wildfires; creating new pro-  
3 visions; amending ORS 737.310 and 742.224; and prescribing an effective date.

4 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

5 **SECTION 1.** ORS 737.310 is amended to read:

6 737.310. The following standards shall apply to the making and use of rates:

7 (1) Rates shall not be excessive, inadequate or unfairly discriminatory.

8 (2) As to all classes of insurance, other than workers' compensation and title insurance:

9 (a) No rate shall be held to be excessive unless:

10 (A) Such rate is unreasonably high for the insurance provided; and

11 (B) A reasonable degree of competition does not exist in the area with respect to the classi-  
12 fication to which such rate is applicable.

13 (b) No rate shall be held inadequate unless such rate is unreasonably low for the insurance  
14 provided and:

15 (A) Use or continued use of such rate endangers the solvency of the insurer; or

16 (B) The use of such rate by the insurer has, or if continued will have, the effect of destroying  
17 competition or creating a monopoly.

18 (3) **Except as provided in subsection (6)(b) of this section**, rates for each classification of  
19 coverage [*shall*] **must** be based on the claims experience of insurers within Oregon on that classi-  
20 fication of coverage unless that experience provides an insufficient base for actuarially sound rates.

21 (4) Due consideration shall be given to past and prospective loss experience within this state,  
22 to the hazards of conflagration and catastrophe, to a reasonable margin for profit and to contin-  
23 gencies, to dividends, savings or unabsorbed premium deposits allowed or returned by insurers to  
24 their policyholders, members or subscribers, to past and prospective expenses specially applicable  
25 to this state, and to all other relevant factors, including judgment factors deemed relevant, within  
26 this state.

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (5) In addition to subsection (4) of this section, rates for home protection insurance may include  
2 provision for unreimbursed costs of risk inspection and for loss costs under policies which are ter-  
3 minated without premium because the related home sale is not made.

4 (6)(a) In the case of fire insurance rates, consideration may be given to the experience of the  
5 fire insurance business during the most recent five-year period for which such experience is avail-  
6 able.

7 **(b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this subsection, an insurer may not increase an**  
8 **insured's premium for fire insurance more than three percent in each year in which the fire**  
9 **insurance policy is in effect for the insured if the fire insurance covers:**

10 **(A) Property located in the wildland-urban interface, as defined in ORS 477.015; or**

11 **(B) Property of an insured that is engaged in farming or resource extraction as the**  
12 **insured's primary employment or economic or business activity. The Department of Con-**  
13 **sumer and Business Services by rule shall determine how and by what measure an insured's**  
14 **employment or economic or business activity would qualify the insured for the limitation on**  
15 **premium increases set forth in this paragraph.**

16 (7) The systems of expense provisions included in the rates for use by any insurer or group of  
17 insurers may differ from those of other insurers or groups of insurers to reflect the requirements  
18 of the operating methods of any such insurer or group of insurers with respect to any class of in-  
19 surance, or with respect to any subdivision or combination thereof for which subdivision or combi-  
20 nation separate expenses are applicable.

21 (8) Risks may be grouped by classifications for the establishment of rates and minimum premi-  
22 ums. Classification rates for casualty, surety or inland marine risks may be modified to produce  
23 rates for individual risks in accordance with rating plans which establish standards for measuring  
24 variations in hazards or expense provisions or both. Such standards may measure any differences  
25 among risks that can be demonstrated to have a probable effect upon losses or expenses.

26 (9) Due consideration shall be given, in the making and use of rates for all insurance, to in-  
27 vestment income earned by the insurer, to insurer profits and to accumulated reserves for vocational  
28 rehabilitation services and for claim costs related to orders or awards made pursuant to ORS  
29 656.278.

30 (10) The Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, by rule, shall prescribe  
31 the conditions under which a division of payroll between different manual classifications is permit-  
32 ted for purposes of computing workers' compensation premiums.

33 (11)(a) The director shall not approve any workers' compensation rating system that does not  
34 include a plan for rewarding employers, however small, that have good loss experience or programs  
35 likely to improve accident prevention. However, this paragraph is not intended to require that all  
36 employers be experience rated.

37 (b) The director shall not approve any workers' compensation rating system that does not allow  
38 the insurer to include potential third party recovery as one of the variables in the claims reserving  
39 process.

40 (12) At the time an insurer issues a workers' compensation insurance policy to an insured for  
41 the first time, the insurer shall give written notice to the insured of the rating classifications to  
42 which the insured's employees are to be assigned and shall provide an adequate description of work  
43 activities in each classification. In the event an insurer recommences coverage following its termi-  
44 nation, the notice required under this subsection must be given only if the gap in coverage exceeds  
45 six months.

1 (13) If an insurer determines the workers' compensation insurance policy of an insured needs  
2 reclassification, the insurer:

3 (a) May bill an additional premium for the revised classification after the insurer has provided  
4 the insured at least 60 days' written notice of the reclassification.

5 (b) Shall bill retroactively to policy inception or date of change in insured's operations for any  
6 reclassification that results in a net reduction of premium.

7 (c) May, notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this subsection, retroactively bill an insured for re-  
8 classification during the policy year without prior notice of reclassification if the insurer shows by  
9 a preponderance of the evidence that:

10 (A) The insured knew that the employees were misclassified, or the insured was adequately in-  
11 formed by the insurer of the proper classification for the insured's employees;

12 (B) The insured provided improper or inaccurate information concerning its operations; or

13 (C) The insured's operations changed after the date information on the employees was obtained  
14 from the insured.

15 (14) In consultation with system participants, the director shall analyze the rating classification  
16 system to investigate changes that simplify the system and reduce costs for employers and insurers  
17 while preserving rate equity and minimizing the potential for abuse. The director shall give partic-  
18 ular emphasis to the method of allocating payroll to rating classifications and to alternatives to  
19 methods that require verifiable payroll records. Upon completion of this analysis, the director shall  
20 implement appropriate changes to the system.

21 (15) The director shall adopt rules to carry out the provisions of this section and may by rule  
22 specify procedures relating to rating and ratemaking by workers' compensation insurers.

23 (16) A rate increase based solely upon an insured's attaining or exceeding 65 years of age shall  
24 be presumed to be unfairly discriminatory unless the increase is clearly based on sound actuarial  
25 principles or is related to actual or reasonably anticipated experience.

26 (17) An insurer offering homeowner insurance, as defined in ORS 746.600, in this state shall:

27 (a) Make information on whether and how wildfire risk mitigation actions, as defined in ORS  
28 742.277, may impact the insurer's underwriting and rates publicly available on the insurer's website.

29 (b) Reflect in the insurer's underwriting guidelines and rate plans how the insurer addresses or  
30 considers wildfire risk mitigation actions, as defined in ORS 742.277.

31 **SECTION 2.** ORS 742.224 is amended to read:

32 742.224. (1) A fire insurance policy shall contain a provision as follows: "This policy shall be  
33 canceled at any time at the request of the insured, in which case this company shall, upon demand  
34 and surrender of this policy, refund the excess of paid premium above the customary short rates for  
35 the expired time."

36 (2) The **fire insurance** policy also shall provide:

37 (a) That, **except as provided in subsections (3) and (4) of this section**, the insurer may can-  
38 cel the policy at any time by giving 10 days' written notice of cancellation to the insured in the  
39 event of nonpayment of premium or 30 days' written notice for any other reason. However, when fire  
40 insurance coverage is part of a package policy including commercial liability insurance, cancellation  
41 of the policy is governed by the provisions of ORS 742.702.

42 (b) That cancellation by the insurer may be made with or without tender of the excess of paid  
43 premium above the pro rata premium for the expired time, and that the excess, if not tendered with  
44 the cancellation, will be refunded on demand.

45 **(3) Notwithstanding ORS 742.202, an insurer may not cancel a fire insurance policy**

1 without the consent of the insured unless within the previous three years the insurer has  
 2 received a claim from the insured for which the insurer paid out more than 75 percent of the  
 3 coverage limit for the policy and:

4 (a) The insured’s covered property is located in the wildland-urban interface, as defined  
 5 in ORS 477.015; or

6 (b) The insured is engaged in farming or resource extraction as the insured’s primary  
 7 employment or economic or business activity. The Department of Consumer and Business  
 8 Services by rule shall determine how and by what measure an insured’s employment or  
 9 economic or business activity would qualify the insured for the limitation on cancellation set  
 10 forth in this subsection.

11 (4) Notwithstanding ORS 742.202, an insurer may not cancel a fire insurance policy  
 12 without the consent of the insured if the reason for the cancellation is the insurer’s claims  
 13 experience with other insureds within the municipality, county or region of this state where  
 14 the insured’s covered property is located and:

15 (a) The insured’s covered property is located in the wildland-urban interface, as defined  
 16 in ORS 477.015; or

17 (b) The insured is engaged in farming or resource extraction as the insured’s primary  
 18 employment or economic or business activity. The department by rule shall determine how  
 19 and by what measure an insured’s employment or economic or business activity would  
 20 qualify the insured for the limitation on cancellation set forth in this subsection.

21 [(3)] (5) When an insurer gives notice of cancellation, the notice shall state that the excess of  
 22 paid premium above the pro rata premium for the expired time, if not tendered with the notice, will  
 23 be refunded on demand.

24 **SECTION 3.** The amendments to ORS 737.310 and 742.224 by sections 1 and 2 of this 2025  
 25 Act apply to contracts of insurance that an insurer issues or renews on or after the opera-  
 26 tive date set forth in section 4 of this 2025 Act.

27 **SECTION 4.** (1) The amendments to ORS 737.310 and 742.224 by sections 1 and 2 of this  
 28 2025 Act become operative on January 1, 2026.

29 (2) The Department of Consumer and Business Services may adopt rules and take any  
 30 other action before the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section that is nec-  
 31 essary to enable the department, on and after the operative date specified in subsection (1)  
 32 of this section, to undertake and exercise the duties, functions and powers conferred on the  
 33 department by the amendments to ORS 737.310 and 742.224 by sections 1 and 2 of this 2025  
 34 Act.

35 **SECTION 5.** This 2025 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2025  
 36 regular session of the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.