



February 12, 2025

Subject: SB 355 - **SUPPORT**

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and Committee Members:

We support SB 355, which establishes a pilot grant program for private landowners and companies to promote the use of air curtain incinerators (ACI) for wildfire risk management.

Key Benefits of ACIs:

- **Operational Flexibility:** ACIs can operate effectively in weather conditions that restrict traditional burns, such as during winter inversions, and can be deployed in remote areas with limited labor resources.
- **Improved Air Quality:** ACIs significantly reduce particulate emissions compared to traditional open pile burning by using a powerful fan to create an "air curtain" that enhances combustion and reburns smoke particles, resulting in up to 85% fewer pollutants. This allows their use in smoke sensitive areas.
- **Versatile Applications:** ACIs support a variety of essential land management activities, including:
 - Slash and biomass disposal
 - Post-storm cleanup
 - Orchard and agricultural waste removal
 - Pest and pathogen control (e.g., emerald ash borer, sudden oak death)
 - Phytosanitation for invasive species management
- **Stimulating Biochar Markets:** While the primary function of ACIs is clean waste removal, the biochar byproduct holds potential for market growth in soil restoration and carbon sequestration, offering co-benefits for climate resilience.

Why a Grant Program is Helpful:

- **Encourages Adoption:** A grant program lowers financial barriers for organizations and communities, enabling the acquisition and deployment of ACI technology, especially in underserved rural areas.
- **Promotes Innovation:** Pilot grants foster experimentation with best practices, operational efficiencies, and innovative uses of ACIs, generating valuable data to inform future policies and programs.
- **Builds Capacity:** By supporting initial investments, grants help establish local expertise and infrastructure, creating sustainable pathways for long-term wildfire risk reduction.

Why SB 355 Matters:

As Oregon faces escalating wildfire risks, pest outbreaks, and the impacts of severe weather events, SB 355 supports another tool to address woody biomass build-up and waste.

We urge your support for SB 355 to help Oregon lead in sustainable, innovative wildfire mitigation and natural resource management strategies.