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House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

Testimony on HB 3172

Submitted by: Kyle Smith, Director of Government Relations

The Nature Conservancy supports House Bill 3172 which establishes subsidies for fire-resistant construction for individuals who are re-building after a wildfire, and for proactive retrofits and upgrades to existing homes and ADUs owned by low-income individuals living in the wildland urban interface (WUI).

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Oregon, TNC has over 80,000 supporters and members in every county of the state, where we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with ranchers, farmers, fishers, and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature.

More than \$12.7 billion worth of homes in Oregon are at risk from wildfire and wildfire smoke, posing serious threats to private property, human health, and local economies. At the same time, our state is confronting a housing affordability crisis. Home hardening is a critical component of protecting our existing housing stock and ensuring that future developments are more resilient to wildfire.

After serving for the last ten months on the Governor's Wildfire Funding Workgroup, TNC is hopeful that this session, the legislature will pass permanent and robust funding for wildfire mitigation and suppression. Home hardening and community preparedness, along with landscape resiliency, and safe and effective wildfire response are the pillars of National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy and central to Oregon's efforts to respond holistically to the wildfire

crisis. The Wildfire Prepared Structure Grant Program established through HB 3172 will help ensure resources to adapt to this new reality are accessible for the individuals in our communities who are at the greatest risk from the harms of wildfire. We urge your support for HB 3172.