

Submitter: Heather Ikeler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3172

I am writing in support of HB 3172. I watched the movie “Elemental” not long after it came out and it absolutely convinced me that home hardening is the best and most effective way to protect homeowners and communities from damages resulting from wildfire. The other commonly proposed method for preventing damage to communities during wildfires is preventive forest thinning, which is largely ineffective, may increase fires severity, and often wastes money, time, and people-power. As the fire season continues to lengthen as a result of the climate crisis and misguided, overzealous fire suppression, it is imperative that we increase resources to our communities to become more fire resilient. Home hardening is the most effective and cost-efficient way to do so. Protecting homes from ignition from flying embers is a very effective way to protect residential structures. Fire hardening makes the community more resistant to the spread of wildfire. Slowing down a fire, may create more time and opportunity for emergency responders to protect life and property from a fire.

Forest thinning on the other hand, doesn’t help protect communities from wildfire. The main factor in determining a fire’s severity is weather, especially fuel aridity (not density) and wind. The fuel profile of a forest is incidental to the impacts from high winds.

Logging forests leads to decreased carbon sequestration capability from the forest which then leads to a worsening of the climate crisis, which would then lead to worsening fires from more arid forests. Therefore, logging actually creates the problem it’s supposedly solving when used in forest thinning. Thinning a forest can actually make wildfire behavior more intense by opening up the canopy, thus drying the fuel and increasing wind speed.

Sincerely,  
Heather Ikeler

