

Submitter: Nicholas Winner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR11

Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane and members of the committee,

I encourage you to pass SJR 11 and let Oregonians decide if lottery dollars should be used to fund wildfire suppression and mitigation.

As a volunteer firefighter and forester I understand the need and the complexities of paying for wildfire.

This concept was unanimously proposed by a diverse group of stakeholders that included environmental groups, landowners, firefighter unions, ranchers, tribes and health advocates. It's an idea worthy of consideration by Oregon voters because it uses existing, undesignated, voluntary funds to pay for something that impacts all Oregonians – instead of a new tax.

Wildfire and the smoke produced takes lives, burns our homes, damages our air and water quality, threatens our health and hurts tourism business. The costs of putting those fires out have skyrocketed and we need a permanent solution now so the Department of Forestry can pay firefighters and do work to prevent future fires.

Some lottery dollars are already used to pay for things that benefit all Oregonians - like state parks, outdoor school and salmon habitat. Putting out fires and preventing new ones is a critical Oregon problem and just as worthy of a cause for money people voluntarily spend.

It's a good solution to an urgent problem, uses existing money and doesn't require a new tax! Let the citizens decide. Please send SJR 11 to Oregon voters.

Thank you for your consideration of my perspective on this issue.