



Approved Copy

## Wildfire Programs Advisory Council – Meeting

Friday October 14, 2022

The complete Wildfire Programs Advisory Council can be viewed at the following website and serves as the official public meeting record: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Pages/wildfire-programs-council.aspx>

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### Welcome

Chair Bennett

Chair Bennett welcomed the council members and commended them, as well as staff, on their hard work so far, and the quality of the council's report. Chair Bennett reviewed the meeting's agenda and objectives, he advised the council that there were written comments that had been submitted for review and that there were stakeholders signed up to provide commend during the public comment period after lunch at 1:00 p.m.

Senator Golden thanked the council for its work, he noted the on-going concerns of some stakeholders about the wildfire risk map and the risk designations and that this necessitated a continued focus on outreach and public engagement. Senator Golden also recognized the work that multiple agencies did during the 2022 fire season.

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### House Keeping

Vice-chair Browning

Vice Chair Browning took attendance for the meeting and reviewed the meeting etiquette.

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### Director's Update

Director Grafe

Director Grafe noted for the council they would have the opportunity to select a new chair and co-chair if the council chose to. The council could continue with the current chair and co-chair for another year, or the council could choose to hold an election for chair and co-chair at the next meeting.

Director Grafe provided an update that detailed how the duties of the director were performed over the first year of the position. He highlighted several groups that he worked with and presented to about the work of the director and the council including both national and state level organizations. The organizations included but were not limited to:

- Wildland Fire Leadership Council
  - Wildland Fire Mitigation & Management Commission
  - Aspen Institute and the Nature Conservancy
  - Rangeland Fire Protection Summit
  - 1000 Friends of Oregon
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- Oregon Home Builders Association
  - Oregon Forest Industries Council
  - Association of Oregon Counties
  - Oregon Fire Service Annual Conference
  - Oregon Conservation Corps Advisory Committee

Director Grafe updated the council on the coordination meetings between the director and the eleven different implementation agencies under Senate Bill 762. Coordination between these agencies and the council is one of the primary purposes of the director position. In addition to the council and the individual agencies the director works with several coordination teams including: The Oregon Wildfire Detection Camera Interoperability Committee, the governor’s infrastructure cabinet, as well as several state and federal agencies working on landscape resiliency.

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**Council Report**

Chair Bennett, All

Director Grafe stated that the feedback that the council got from agencies was helpful and added clarity and accuracy to the report. The director highlighted the few substantive changes that came out of agency feedback for the council to consider. The first change was added language to the report expanding the eligibility of grant programs to include not-for-profit community-based organizations. The second was to conduct an analysis on households that receive ODHS assistance and its wildfire risk. These changes were discussed by the council and approved.

The third substantive change involved the discussion of the criteria for qualifying for the small forestland grant program. The council expressed some concern that the criteria may be screening out potentially eligible properties. The council discussed the topic and received input from the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). Ultimately the council was satisfied that the program criteria were not unduly restricting applicants to the small forestland grant program at this time and decided to remove that part of the council’s report.

Chair Bennett asked, if council members had any additional concerns about the report. Member O’Keefe requested some language changes to add clarity or accuracy and they were adopted without objection. Throughout the discussion of the council’s report the council deliberated on the best way to acknowledge the concerns expressed by members of the public with the wildfire risk map and the impacts of mitigation measures on a property’s risk classification.

The chairs of workgroup two updated the council on the status of the addendum to the council’s report addressing the report to the legislature from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). Member Mary Kyle McCurdy explained that the work group had consensus support for several of DLCD’s recommendations including prioritizing high and extreme risk areas, encouraging protection plans for high and extreme risk communities, and focusing on measures that impact on a larger scale than the individual property level. There was some concern expressed on implementing DLCD requirements in jurisdictions with planning departments that have limited resources.

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**Public Comment**

All

During the public comment period the following comments were received by the council:

Bob Hart of Bob Hart Consulting LLC suggested that a central website be created to communicate to the public on Senate Bill 762 implementation. He stated that the implementation timelines lacked clarity now that the risk map had been delayed. He stated that there should be some way, perhaps insurance, to cover liability created by prescribed burns. He expressed some confusion about how

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the wildland urban interface (WUI) was defined. He said that SB 762 would be better implemented using recommendations and incentives instead of mandates.

Kyle Williams, Director of Forestry Protection for the Oregon Forestry and Industry Council pointed out a specific section of the report he felt could give the impression that ODF was expanding its coverage of fire protection when that wasn't the intent of the law.

Brock Nation of the Oregon Association of Realtors had four recommendations for the council:

1. That the risk mapping incorporates local conditions and mitigation measures,
2. Focus on outreach and education on defensible space,
3. Consider incentives to encourage adoption of improved building codes,
4. Recommend the voluntary implementation path for the recommendations from DLCD.

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### **Council Report**

Chair Bennett, All

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As the council reopened the discussion on the report, the chair and vice-chair suggested the council may want to include a recommendation in the report that additional staff support be provided for the director's office to be able to support the mandate for that role and the council.

The council discussed how to implement and use an additional layer on the wildfire risk map that included information on mitigation measures that have been implemented on individual properties. The council thoroughly examined the larger landscape level exposure to wildfire that cannot be changed by specific individual mitigation measures conducted on individual properties. I was recognized that wildfire mitigation measures such as implementing defensible space and hardening of homes, increases a home/community survivability during wildfire, but it does not change the wildfire exposure on an individual property. There was concern that if property owners' efforts at mitigation are not acknowledged in some way it would reduce buy-in from property owners in high and extreme wildfire risk zones and ultimately undermine the efforts of the council to reduce community risk. There was broad agreement that this was a significant communication, education, and outreach problem and that successful communication will include good explanations of both exposure to wildfire, the individual property level risk due to that exposure, and what Oregonian's can do to increase home/community survivability through implementing these wildfire defense measures.

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### **Wrap Up**

Chair Bennett

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Before closing, the chair and the director reviewed the next steps for the council including the scheduling of the next meeting, workgroup 2's next meeting to work on the council's response to the DLCD report, the next update on the wildfire risk map, and the meeting schedule for 2023. The council also decided by consensus to retain Chair Bennett and Vice Chair Browning in their roles for another year.

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## **Public comments written received**

### **Written Comments**

- Bob Hart, Bob Hart Consulting LLC
- Jean Hart
- Oregon Wine Council

### **Public Comments or written at the meeting**

- Bob Hart, Bob Hart Consulting LLC
- Kyle Williams Oregon Forestry and Industry Council
- Brock Nation, Oregon Association of Realtors