



Public Health Advisory Board

2577 NE Courtney Dr.
Bend, OR 97701
(541) 322-7410

November 17, 2017

To the Oregon Smoke Management Review Committee:

Please accept this letter as a statement of support by the Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) for the recommendations as described in the attached letter from the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP). In this letter DCFP outlines a comprehensive strategy that would enable greater use of prescribed fires to mitigate the increased danger of larger and more intense wildfires and the significant social, economic and ecological impacts those wildfires cause in our forests and communities.

The recent fires in northern California, particularly those affecting Santa Rosa, a community three times the size of Bend, serve as a vivid reminder of the vulnerability of our community to the potential destruction an out-of-control wildfire presents. Closer to home, in recent years we've witnessed several destructive wildfires (including this year's Milli fire) in Central Oregon that threatened life and property while drawing a thick curtain of unhealthy, even hazardous, air over a large area including the city of Bend. Had conditions been different, one of those fires could easily have resulted in a disaster similar to what we witnessed in California.

Prescribed fire is the most effective tool we have available to reduce wildfire risk to our communities and the people that live, work, and recreate in our forests. These forests are the backbone of our economy and our way of life; we need meaningful reforms to Oregon's smoke management rules like those outlined in the DCFP letter.

We recognize that increased prescribed fire may lead to an increase in short-term smoke impacts in our communities, but we also recognize the need to fight wildfires before they happen. It's important to remember that there is no smoke-free option to living in central Oregon, and in recent years, wildfires have created significantly more unhealthy air quality hazards than any prescribed fires. We must strategically apply prescribed fires in the forests around our communities to reduce the likelihood of severe wildfires that last for weeks in the summer and have far-reaching negative consequences on public health, local economies, and the long-term resilience of our forests.

In conclusion, PHAB supports a more holistic solution to prescribed fire and smoke management than what is currently provided by state policy. We believe that the short-term impacts of prescribed fire will be far less than the impacts of wildfire. While we

may be reducing near-term exposure to smoke by limiting prescribed fire now, it comes at the expense of future Oregonians who will face increasingly severe wildfires and wildfire smoke.

We ask that you carefully consider strategies to increase the use of prescribed fire while protecting air quality and the health of our communities in the long run.

Respectfully,



Kate Wells
PHAB Chair
Kate.Wells@pacificsource.com



Keith Winsor
PHAB Vice Chair
kcwinsor@cpinfo.com

PHAB Membership:

Rebeckah Berry	Central Oregon Health Council
Charla DeHate	La Pine Community Health Center, CEO
Charles Frazier	Community Representative and Retired Pharmacist
Sharity Ludwig	Advantage Dental, Director of Community Dental Programs
Tami Pike	Bend La Pine Schools, District Health Services Supervisor
James Powell	Community Representative and Retired Physician
Robert Ross, MD	St. Charles Health System
Steve Strang	Mosaic Medical, Director of Operations
Kate Wells	PacificSource, Director, Community Health Development
Keith Winsor	Academy Medical Systems