



## Wildfire Programs Advisory Council (WPAC) – Remote Meeting

Friday, July 17, 2026

9:00am - 12:00pm

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### Welcome

Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

Chair reviewed the agenda, the meeting objectives, and ensured that everyone was able to get the agenda and materials before the meeting. The Chair acknowledged that the group should be timely because we are in the thick of fire season. Roll was called by Tabitha Neely before the group approved the April 2026 meeting summary without any adjustments or comments.

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### Director's Report

Doug Grafe

Doug Grafe gave the WPAC the Director's Report along with ODF and OSFM agency updates. Doug noted the difficulty of the last 72 hours of fire activity prior to the meeting and will defer the fire season details to the agencies. Doug reflected on the first five years of Oregon's Wildfire Program development with the implementation of SB 762. Doug recognized the complexity of issues surrounding the advancement of wildfire protection in Oregon and appreciated the WPAC's guidance. Doug discussed a variety of policy and agency program development including funding stability established in the first five years, while emphasizing the need to specifically advance wildfire mitigation efforts over the next five years to protect Oregon's resources and communities from wildfire. He noted that scaling up mitigation projects across the state will be essential to reducing the catastrophic nature of wildfire in our future.

OSFM's Mariana Ruiz-Temple and ODF's Kyle Williams walked the WPAC through the current map of fire activity across the state. They discussed the beginning of and increased fire season activity on 7/15 from lightning storms that ignited hundreds of fires in a 24 hour period, during an extreme heat and hazardous fuel advisories. Mariana noted that all 3 OSFM incident management teams were currently deployed. Kyle shared that all but one incident management team has been assigned before discussing ongoing fire activity. There was significant discussion regarding how lightning strike fires present difficulty in mobilizing resources between fires as well as discussing the various triage decisions that ODF and OSFM must make in fighting these fires. Out-of-state incident management teams are being brought in to provide a surge of help along with critical fire line leadership being deployed from across the nation to Oregon. Australian and New Zealand teams are coming to aid in Oregon. Canada also has a tough season, so all North America is highly taxed this fire season but when they can, we expect they will support Oregon's fires later in the season.

Questions and discussions ensued about national context of resource availability, funding, financial, and jurisdictional responsibilities of fighting federal/state/private fires, mutual aid systems, and the scale of property loss.

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### WPAC Annual Report Coordination

Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

- Senate Bill 83 (2025), Agency Annual Reports. Links on page 5 - [Quarterly Report 3](#)

WPAC transitioned to the SB 83 agency annual reports presented by: Doug Denning (HECC), Michael Orman (DEQ), Nolan Moser (PUC), KC Kasey (ODF), Chief Ruiz-Temple (OSFM).

- Chief Ruiz-Temple gave brief highlights of 2025 annual report for 762. Highlights including kicking off

public private partnership with Earth Satellite alliance to track accomplishments, public private partnerships with community wildfire risk reduction and insurance, conducted 6400 defensible space assessments in Oregon with phase 2 launching in the next few months, and success stories from grants and ongoing wildfire mitigation programs.

- State Forester KC Kasey gave brief highlights on landscape resiliency projects for ODF. ODF has spent about \$30 million over the past couple of year's to reduce fire risk with 245,000 acres being treated across the state across 14 different landscape resiliency projects completed. ODF intends to work with OSFM on the landscape scale and are also looking for pilot project areas that ODF can treat lands around hour highest risk communities.
- PUC's Nolan Moser, Director of the Public Utility Commission, gave a report on utility planning and highlighted their efforts to collect all public and private utility wildfire mitigation plans. No public safety power shutoffs (PSPS) were reported in 2025. More higher-level work with OEM on the PSPS process is necessary in the future to ensure awareness and understanding of the PSPS process works with public notifications. Three workshops for Oregon Wildfire Electric Collaborative with wildfire response agencies were established in 2025. Spending to date for investor-owned utilities on infrastructure hardening is just over 1 billion for the three utilities that PUC regulate directly on rates. Plans for 2026-2028 is forecasted at another 1.25 billion dollars. Highlighted a major study kicked off in Feb 2026 on policy review that seeks to balance utility accountability with future policies that help advance PUC's ability to make investments in utility infrastructure.
- DEQ's Michael Orman presented SB 83 report on two areas: the states prescribed fire program work and protecting community health with the establishment of community response plans. Michael discussed the report at a high-level detailing how 9 of the 38 smoke-sensitive receptor areas have community response plans developed. In the 2025 wildfire season, 13 air quality advisories over 24 days were issued with Grants Pass having the most impacts. For wildfire season last year, DEQ operated an ambient monitoring network that requires annual operation and maintenance that costs a little over \$2.5 million. In terms of recommendations, DEQ recommended that the legislature continue to support community response plan development. DEQ also wants legislature to fund expanding the smoke monitoring network.
- HECC's Doug Denning gave a presentation on the Oregon Conservation Corps and its three components: to reduce the risk wildfire poses to communities and critical infrastructure, to help create fire adapted communities, and engage youth and young adults from the ages between 16 and 26 in workforce training and making career pathway connections. Their report covers from July 2024 to June 2025. Doug closed with asking the WPAC if there are any metrics they want included going forward – no specifics were offered at this time.

Doug noted that not every agency in the wildfire programs presented, if there are other agencies that the WPAC wishes to hear from they can contact himself or the Chair.

Chair Bayer discussed the importance of the annual WPAC report that the WPAC creates and presents to the legislature and the Governor, prior to the 2027 session. The WPAC is breaking into four subgroups to prepare portions of the report. Chair Bayer explained the frontloaded timeline to the WPAC and the potential September 25<sup>th</sup> rough draft review meeting. Group leaders have been selected for each of the four subgroups and they will shoulder most of the drafting load. Chair Bayer emphasizes brevity for the report: sub 20 pages would be ideal for the entire report.

The subject matters being covered in the report are: utilities, land use, wildfire mitigation & funding which includes community smoke response plans, and under protected lands. The groups need to stay within the purview of SB 762 and the overall subject matter but can draft a report about anything within those parameters. The subgroup chairs are Dave Hunnicutt for Utilities, Brandon Pursinger for land use, Mary Kyle McCurdy for Wildfire Mitigation, and Chad Washington for under protected lands. Every WPAC member must sign up for at least one subgroup. The WPAC held a roll call to see which groups members wanted to participate in and Jason Fredrickson kept a record as groups prepared to meet in the coming months.

- Senator Jeff Golden: Thanking the WPAC for their work and the report, further emphasis on brevity for the WPAC report and suggestion on outreach to make legislators read the report carefully. Highlight that overall funding challenge since Fire 35 has not been solved yet, especially for mitigation and emergency fire suppression costs, and additional emphasis on resource needs and insurance challenges facing communities.
- Bob Hart: Comment on wildfire rules, regulations, codes, and land use.
- Jennifer Jolly: Comment on utilities representing consumer-owned utilities and they request that the utilities subgroup involve them in talks since they are different from investor-owned utilities.

Discussion of how WPAC meetings and information is publicized and member's responsibility to promote the WPACs work.

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11:55 pm      **Wrap Up**

Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

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Next WPAC meeting is October 16. Chair will let members know if September 25<sup>th</sup> meeting is necessary.