Wildfire Programs Advisory Council (WPAC) – Remote Meeting

Friday, October 16, 2026
9:00am - 12:00pm

9:00 am	**Welcome**	Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

Meeting began with recognition of tragedy at Silver Rail Elementary School. Chair Bayer gave a run down of the agenda and meeting objectives and outlined the public comments. Goal of the meeting is to talk about everything in the draft WPAC report. Chair called for roll call attendance. Motion passed to approve July 2026 meeting summary unanimously.

9:15 am	**Director's Report**	Doug Grafe

Director Grafe highlighted ongoing fires, firefighting efforts, and partnerships necessary to respond to the 2026 fire season. Director Grafe spoke optimistically of the coming cooler temperatures and humidity, and the potential close of fire season. As of October 16, fire season is still ongoing. Director Grafe noted the yearly statistics for the state's fires and spoke about an anomaly they found related to the big grass fire that burned into Idaho (400,000 acres in Idaho). This updates the number of acres burned from 2.5 million down to 2.1 million acres burned in the state of Oregon, but this is still a record in the state's modern history. Director Grafe also spoke about the lives and infrastructure lost during this fire season. Director Grafe noted that despite the dramatic fire season during the summer, the state was fortunate with favorable lack of east winds throughout September. The gross cost for this fire season was approximately 360 million dollars, but the anticipated net costs will amount to 232 million dollars. There are two outstanding FEMA requests that may further lower the state's net cost. A new treasury loans process was initiated through the Dept. of Forestry. The Director closed the report with an acknowledgment of the tragedy at Silver Rail as well as the year's wildfire fatalities. Fire season is not just numbers and the director wanted to make space for that.

9:30 am	**Public Comment**	Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

Three people registered to deliver public comment to the WPAC.

Bob Hart – Recommends that public comment be moved to the end of meetings so they can hear the committee's discussion prior to commenting. Comment on equity considerations and fire's disregard.

Jennifer Joly (Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association, 11 member city owned and operated electric utilities – high level overview on utility portion of WPAC draft report after their review. Will send written comments in to Jason F. as well.

Alex - southern Oregon/ Jackson County resident that wants to make WPAC aware of what's going on in southern Oregon and the struggle of losing one's home. Also discussion on how to get report in front of more eyes.

Senator Golden – Comments that this is his last council meeting and proud of the work he and the committee have done together. He highlighted the efforts of the council in fighting fires and discussed how to further the WPAC report's outreach.

9:45 am **WPAC Report Review** Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

Chair pivoted the meeting to reviewing the draft report and re-outlined the procedural steps of reviewing the comments in the draft, one-by-one aiming for as much consensus as possible. When it is not possible, conflicts and disagreements will be recorded in the draft notes. Susan M. and the director led the WPAC through the draft report beginning with the executive summary and spreadsheet of recommendations. WPAC and director wanted to ensure that the substance of the report is adequate with final formatting to occur after the report is finalized in November. Acknowledgement of agency reports and efforts going into the January 2027 deadline.

The WPAC discussed the outstanding comments on the draft report and had each subgroup address the WPAC's questions in order to finalize the report's contents. Directions from the Chair for workgroups to do the wordsmithing and finalize the content of their section's report prior to the November meeting. The WPAC began with the recommendations for utilizing subgroup before going through land-use, under-protect lands, and wildfire mitigation. Discussion of concerns in the recommendations and how the WPAC can contextualize the challenges to embracing the recommendations. Discussion by the WPAC on how wide the utility recommendation can be without going beyond PUC's authority. Discussion on what each recommendation is trying to do and whether certain additions would constitute a substantive change to the recommendation. Utility section will continue their work and bring new draft to November meeting. Acknowledgement of the importance of under-protected lands and the wildfire protection efforts that are required by 2030. Acknowledgment that legislators are the main audience, and how the WPAC can frame the protection map and information to be easily digestible and informative. Discussion of how the WPAC can ensure that the protection map accurately reflects the report's information. Discussion of the equity considerations section and that, referencing earlier public comment, it was always supposed to be included, per SB 762, in this report. Director Grafe received information during this review to prepare documents for the November 6, 2026, meeting.

11:55 pm **Wrap Up** Chair Bayer, Vice Chair Browne

WPAC confirmed the 2027 meeting dates as well as confirming that the next meeting would occur on November 6, 2026, to finalize the report.

- 2027 WPAC Dates:
    - January 15th
    - April 16th
    - July 16th
    - October 15th