August 2019

Fire Suppression Committee

Draft Policy Proposals for consideration by the Governor's Wildfire Response Council

Overarching Foundational Statement:

In response to the ever-increasing wildfire threat and risks affecting all Oregonians, our communities, and natural resources, all lands in Oregon require an adequate level of wildfire protection. Additional funding and capacity is needed and should be borne by all Oregonians to meet the increased demand, complexity, and threat of wildfires. Wildfires are a significant and complex problem affecting the safety, health, water security, economic security, environment and well –being of all Oregonians. Addressing this problem requires, all Oregonians, not only individual sectors and stakeholders, be responsible for contributing to and funding the solution.

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State Recommendations: (Focus of the August 15 Meeting)

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1. U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

A) Maintain BLM O&C Land Protection Agreement with ODF

Problem Statement:

Oregon's forests are a compilation of land ownerships resulting from historical patterns of settlements and congressional actions. The BLM and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) have worked together for decades to protect a patchwork of lands in western Oregon known as the Oregon and California Railroad Lands, or O&C lands. The BLM is proposing cost containment measures that would remove some lands from the current agreement, historically protected by ODF. Removing O&C lands from the protection system would create thousands of miles of additional suppression jurisdictional boundaries, increasing risk and costs, and overall wildfire protection complexity.

Policy Statement:

Governor Kate Brown's May 2019 letter to the U.S. Department of the Interior references the value BLM's western Oregon O&C lands hold as part of Oregon's complete and coordinated wildfire protection system. To protect the safety and economic resiliency of rural communities across the state, it is important BLM maintain the agreement with ODF for fire prevention and suppression on all O&C lands.

Committee Recommendation to the Council:

Support the Governor's letter to include the BLM's western Oregon lands under ODF protection in future agreements with no reduction in acres. ODF protection of O&C lands is essential to maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of Oregon's complete and coordinated fire suppression system. Should the BLM remove acres from the current agreement, the state of Oregon will require assurances an adequate level of protection is maintained. Any acres removed from the current agreement should have accompanying plans addressing the transfer of risk in these new joint response checkerboard areas.

Recommended Actionable Items:

A. Recommend the Wildfire Response Council submit a letter to the Oregon federal delegation seeking permanent funding for the existing and future agreement between ODF and BLM. This funding would cover BLM's share of fire readiness costs, ensuring an adequate level of protection is maintained.

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B) Fuels Management on BLM Land

Problem Statement:

Reductions to the BLM's budgets for fuels management and prescribed fire have resulted in reduced accomplishments in hazardous fuels treatments. Excess fuels on the landscape can lead to increased wildfire intensity, creating difficulties in fire suppression. Additional fuels reduction work, and ongoing maintenance of existing treatments, is needed in the checkerboard O&C lands.

Policy Statement:

In order to reduce the catastrophic impacts of wildfires to Oregon communities, adequate funding and planning for fuels reduction is needed. A fuels reduction plan should focus efforts in fire-prone areas and include time and geographic goals.

Committee Recommendation to the Council:

Recommendations should be coordinated with the work of both the Mitigation and Adaptation & Recovery Committees.

Recommended Actionable Items:

Recommend consideration of the following items:

A. Consider a resolution by the Wildfire Policy Council to Oregon's federal delegation seeking federal appropriations funding for BLM's prescribed burning and fuel treatments on O&C Lands in Oregon.

B. Consider a joint resolution in the 2020 legislative session requesting the BLM to report annually on planned and completed fire preventative work. Reporting could be based on metrics such as; acres harvested and treated for fuel reduction purposes, acres slash piled and burned for fuel reduction purposes, miles of treated roadsides to provide for safe anchor points, and potential fire breaks.

2. U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

A) Utilizing Suppression Funding to Aid Mitigation

Problem Statement:

USFS funding sources are restricted to activities such as suppression or hazardous fuels mitigation. In order to reduce wildfires in Oregon, the USFS needs to invest in fuels reduction treatments on fire-prone lands, especially near communities. Opportunities to accomplish necessary fuel treatments exist during post-suppression and rehabilitation efforts that are currently missed due to funding source constraints.

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Committee Recommendation to the Council:

Work with Oregon's congressional delegation and the Undersecretary and Chief of the USFS to explore the expanded use of suppression dollars to accomplish critical fuel treatment reductions post-fire. This expansion could increase treatments, mitigating the severity and impacts of future wildfire. Benefits would include treating and opening roads as future fuel breaks, creating potential control points, reducing future risk to firefighters by removing snags along roads and fuel breaks, and maintaining established fuel breaks on the landscape.

Recommendation should be coordinated with the work of both the Mitigation and Adaptation & Recovery Committees.

Recommended Actionable Items:

A. Recommend the Governor and Legislature endorse a resolution, in coordination with the Oregon federal delegation, to explore the expansion of suppression funding to aid fuel treatment mitigation.

B) Build Capacity — USFS Severity Budgets

Problem Statement:

The national fire suppression system is designed to move existing resources around the country to areas with the highest need. Increased fire season severity and complexity across the western states results in reduced resource availability in Oregon. Heavy air tankers, helicopters, smoke jumpers, and crews are in the highest demand and therefore the most limited. Without adequate funding for additional severity resources, demand will continue to outpace supply.

Committee Recommendation to the Council:

To suppress fires in Oregon, the USFS should increase severity funding for aviation and crew capacity. Increased federal severity funding could leverage existing state funds, providing for additional resources in Oregon during peak periods of fire activity. Consideration for additional aviation and smoke jumper assets should be given for Oregon's national forests with large roadless and wilderness areas. Leveraging state and additional federal severity dollars will lead to increased capacity to suppress wildfires that threaten Oregon's communities.

Recommended Actionable Items:

A. Request a resolution from the Legislature to the Undersecretary and the Chief of the USFS seeking additional severity funding for strategically placed resources in high-risk areas throughout Oregon to remain available locally.

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C) Initial Attack Effectiveness

Problem Statement:

A wildfire is an unplanned fire caused by lightning or other natural causes, by accidental (or arson-caused) human ignitions or by an escaped prescribed fire. The risk of wildfire growth is significantly increased during extreme conditions and often limited resources found during peak fire season, leading to devastating impacts to Oregon's communities and natural resources.

Committee Recommendation to Council:

During peak fire season and elevated Preparedness Levels (PL), the USFS should make all attempts to mirror ODF's objective of stopping 98 percent of all wildfires at initial attack. Our committee recommends the USFS utilize wildfire as a tool to accomplish ecological, mitigation, and hazardous fuels treatments during shoulder seasons and other appropriate times, avoiding the transfer of risk to other jurisdictions, agencies, and landowners.

Recommended Actionable Items:

A. Recommend the Wildfire Response Council support a resolution requesting the USFS mirror the ODF's initial attack objective during peak fire season and when PL levels reach 3 and above, codifying this in the annual operating plans and master agreement.

B. Request adequate and necessary funding for the USFS to meet suppression objectives during peak fire season.

D) Fuels Management of USFS Land

Problem Statement:

The current USFS budgets for fuels management and prescribed burning do not provide for necessary hazardous fuels reductions on the landscape. Excess fuels on the landscape can lead to increased wildfire intensity, challenging fire suppression and response. Additional fuels reduction work, and ongoing maintenance of existing treatments, is needed on USFS lands, especially in the Wildland Urban Interface.

Policy Statement:

In order to reduce the catastrophic impacts of wildfires to Oregon communities, adequate funding and planning for fuels reduction is needed. A fuels reduction plan should focus efforts in fire-prone areas and include time and geographic goals.

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Committee Recommendation to the Council:

Recommendations should be coordinated with the work of both the Mitigation and Adaptation & Recovery Committees.

Recommended Actionable Items:

Recommend consideration of the following items:

A. A resolution by the Wildfire Policy Council to Oregon's federal delegation seeking permanent federal appropriations funding for prescribed burning and fuel treatments on USFS lands in Oregon.

B. A joint resolution in the 2020 legislative session requesting the USFS report annually on planned and completed fire preventative work. Reporting could be based on metrics such as; acres harvested and treated for fuel reduction purposes, acres slash piled and burned for fuel reduction purposes, miles of treated roadsides to provide for safe anchor points, and potential fire breaks.

3. Insurance

A) Third-party Insurance Policy for ODF Catastrophic Fire

Problem Statement:

For well over forty years, ODF and landowners have chosen to purchase insurance through underwriters at Lloyds of London to help offset suppression costs related to large fires. This insurance covers costs borne by all ODF jurisdictional fires during severe wildfire years. Over the decades, the insurance premiums and deductible coverage point have increased significantly.

Policy Statement:

Recommend ODF and the Emergency Fire Cost Committee regularly perform due diligence on the value, retention, and policy limits of the existing fire insurance policy. Upon completion of this annual review, continued purchase of the catastrophic fire insurance policy is recommended.

The current policy is $25 million in excess of $50 million in costs at a current price point (premium) of $3.5 million. Following the 2018 fire season, the current market conditions suggest the agency is well positioned with the current policy and needs fewer severe fire seasons and subsequent claims to be better positioned for either lowering premiums or expanding coverage at minimal cost.

Committee Recommendation to Council:

Direct the State Forester to continue to perform due diligence prior to the annual repurchase of the policy. If prudent, investigate potential beneficial alternatives in collaboration with Department of Administrative Services Risk Management

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and other professionals, comparing alternatives and options. Findings should be presented to the Board of Forestry.

Recommended Actionable Items:

A. Recommend ODF continue with third-party catastrophic fire insurance policy from Lloyds of London. Monitor and evaluate global markets annually.

4. Jurisdiction

A) Plan to Protect Under- and Unprotected Lands

Problem Statement:

Oregon's land consists of a patchwork of ownership and authorities. For example, jurisdiction for wildfire suppression may be held by the local fire service, a privately contracted fire agency, a federal agency, ODF, a combination of the aforementioned, or no one at all. Oregon's response model is a collection of successful partnerships, but there are currently not enough resource or personnel capacity to provide all Oregon lands with adequate wildfire suppression capability.

In recent years, fires on under- and unprotected lands have increased in frequency and size. The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and ODF respond with structural and wildland fire resources. Currently, OSFM and ODF are not adequately funded, lack established funding mechanisms, and are not properly staffed to respond to this additional workload.

The lack of local initial attack and organized response of wildfire suppression resources on under and unprotected lands can lead to large wildfires requiring state intervention. A state response can remove already limited resources from the statewide system that are often needed elsewhere, and puts resources into unfamiliar terrain and potentially unsafe conditions. Due to the patchwork of jurisdictions, geography, and responsibilities, this is a complex issue. The definition of an adequate suppression system may not be the same for all areas of the state.

Increased severity and complexity of wildfires on these lands negatively impact Oregonians through evacuations, smoke impacts, loss of crops, major infrastructure impacts, loss of homes, and loss of life.

Definitions:

a. Unprotected land is land with **no** fire agency or organized fire suppression jurisdiction for structures or wildland. Of Oregon's 98,380 square miles, approximately 1,604 (over 1 million acres) are currently unprotected.

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b. Under-protected land is land protected by agencies with insufficient capacity to provide adequate protection for lands within their area of responsibility.

Policy Statement:

For the benefit of all Oregonians, all lands in Oregon should be required to have wildfire suppression capability for initial attack wildfire response.

Committee recommendation to the Council:

Require the adoption of systems or formalized organizations at the county or local level to provide wildland protection for all lands.

Potential Actionable Items:

A. Change current legislation in the Rangeland Statues to include croplands or similar unprotected lands to form wildfire response organizations. Provide funding for the creation of these new programs. Estimated costs are $650,000, which include 2 Full Time positions. A model similar to Rangeland Fire Protection Associations could be applied to croplands and would bolster wildfire suppression capacity for unprotected lands.

B. Increase mutual-aid agreements and memorandums of understanding to meet minimum protection requirements and provide additional wildfire suppression capacity and education.

C. Funding for additional severity aviation resources ($1 million) including increased air tanker base capacity, two single engine airtankers, and private contract fixed-wing aircraft and staff. Utilization of these severity resources will help prevent the invocation of the state Conflagration Act.

D. Direction must be developed and provided to counties defining an adequate level of protection. Development of a timeframe requirement during which a protection system must be established (consider two years).

B) Continue to Support RFPAs

Problem Statement:

The Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs) operate as independent associations of landowners that provide their own local wildfire protection. ODF supports the associations through administrative guidance, some administrative cost reimbursement, fire suppression training, and facilitating access to federal grants and surplus firefighting equipment. RFPA fire prevention and suppression efforts help in conserving sage grouse habitat, safeguarding livestock forage crucial to the local economy, and protecting homes and communities.

Committee Recommendation to the Council:

RFPAs have demonstrated enormous success combating and suppressing wildfires across Oregon's rangelands. The state should continue to support these associations. Validate the current RFPA program and consider the use of this or similar models for other lands in Oregon where appropriate.

Potential Actionable Items:

A. Continue to support current funding levels for all Rangeland Fire Protection Associations.

C) Interagency Collaboration, Education, and Communication

Problem Statement:

State and federal agencies often engage in suppression activities in Unified Command, meaning decision-making authority is shared jointly. There are differences among agencies with regard to policies, authorities, and missions.

Coordination, education, and collaboration are especially critical when Unified Command is established. Miscommunication during fire response has the potential to impact operations on the ground and harm interagency relationships. While OSFM and ODF have a shared understanding of each agency's mission and authorities, this is not always true for interagency teams. In Oregon, OSFM and ODF have existing law and statutes giving them clear suppression responsibilities on private, state, and some federal lands, as well as within communities and around infrastructure.

Policy Statement:

All agencies and teams providing fire suppression response in Oregon need a shared understanding of the Oregon fire response model, with clarity around the structure of OSFM and ODF suppression responsibilities.

Committee Recommendation to Council:

Recommend OSFM and ODF partner to create a policy framework outlining Oregon's suppression responsibilities in a simple, standardized format.

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Potential Actionable Items:

A. Direct OSFM and ODF to create an expectation document outlining Oregon's response system and policy framework to include authorities, priorities, and expectations for resources responding to wildfire within Oregon. Provide the document to all Incident Management Teams operating in Oregon upon arrival/check-in.

B. OSFM and ODF should continue to explore opportunities with state and federal partners to communicate agency missions, authorities, and priorities. Ensure OSFM and ODF are represented in forums such as the Pacific Northwest Coordinating Group, Agency Administrator meetings and trainings, and national and area Incident Commander Councils.

C. Provide direction and written reviews of Incident Management Teams' performance, focused on ODF and OSFM missions and statutory responsibility. Develop an annual report for state and federal decision-makers focused on team performance.

5. Capacity

A) Sustainability and Organizational Capacity

Problem Statement:

The increased severity and complexity of Oregon's wildfire seasons continues to challenge ODF's and OSFM's abilities to respond to the wildfires. Protecting Oregonians, forests and communities from wildfire has created significant strain within both agencies, limiting ability to maintain core business functions.

Due to the need to prioritize wildfire response, ODF is challenged to accomplish and maintain core business functions in Fire, State Forest, Private Forest, and Agency Administration Divisions.

These impacts have also challenged OSFM's ability to accomplish core business functions related to education, regulation, and administration. Response to large wildfires is also taxing the structural fire service as a whole, with local fire agencies being mobilized by OSFM to support efforts statewide.

The demands and complexity of responses for Incident Management Teams (IMTs) continues to increase, outpacing the agencies' ability to staff and train members, thereby reducing the ability to respond to large complex incidents. Protecting Oregonians, our forests, and communities while managing and protecting forests at existing levels is not aligned with current funding structures and staffing levels.

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Wildfire impacts to communities, forests, and all Oregonians continue to rise, affecting all parts of the state. These impacts are increasingly acute to Oregonians' public safety, local communities' social fabric, values, and Oregon's vitality overall.

The Suppression Committee's ongoing discussions regarding funding needs, methods, and allocations are robust and complex with numerous factors to consider, including; fire causes, landscape conditions, where fires start, impact to all Oregonians, challenges of maintaining forestland, and paying for increased fire costs.

Policy Statement:

The agencies responsible for suppressing wildfires in Oregon must have an adequate base level of resources. Additional capacity is also needed to ensure adequate staffing of Incident Management Teams. ODF's overall FTE level has remained flat for over three decades, and no additional OSFM positions have been established for fire response or mitigation, all while workload has exponentially increased. To meet the base level and large fire support needs for a typical fire season, ODF and OSFM recommend, at a minimum, identified critical positions be included in base biennial budgets.

Committee Recommendation to Council:

Support ODF and OSFM capacity initiatives as outlined below.

These recommendations meet current needs and do not account for additional recommendations that come from related committee work under the Governor's Council on Wildfire Response.

ODF-specific recommendations are anchored to the ODF Fire Program Review, Secretary of State audit and recent Agency Initiative. These reviews are a comprehensive assessment of ODF's entire fire protection program, including large fire funding, sustainability of the organization, and policy work. These reports highlight the need for increased capacity to meet current and future demands.

OSFM-specific recommendations are a direct result of a 2019 Listening & Understanding Tour, during which staff visited communities in Oregon most at-risk from the impacts of wildland-urban interface fire as determined by a study conducted at the behest of the USFS. Staff met with leaders of the structural fire service and stakeholders to discuss their current and desired activities surrounding wildland fire prevention and suppression. It was clear that the most critical need around the state was capacity in personnel, resources, and funding. The structural fire service needs additional support in order to keep the communities they serve safe from wildfire.

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This additional capacity will strengthen and improve existing wildfire response systems. Improving fire response effectiveness and efficiency statewide benefits and protects all Oregonians, therefore these costs should be borne by all Oregonians.

Biennial funding needed — ODF and OSFM

55 FTE for ODF:

- 22 FTE Fire Protection - Financials, Prevention, Training, Aviation, Operations
- 12 FTE Private Forests - Urban Interface & Recovery
- 9 FTE Agency Administration – Fire Finance and Support Functions
- 10 FTE State Forests - Response and Good Neighbor Authority
- 2 FTE for supporting new RFPAs covering under or unprotected lands

6 FTE for OSFM:

- 1 FTE Mobilization Coordinator – Support and Coordinate
- 4 FTE Community Risk Reduction Specialists – Mitigation and Suppression
- 1 FTE Supervisor – Support and Coordinate

Additional severity capacity:

- Contracting funds for fire suppression private contracts
- One contract type 3 helicopter and staff (8 seasonal FTE)
- 4 single engine air tankers
- Two next generation air tankers and lead plane
- Funding for wildfire response training
- Funding for type-2 private contract 20-person initial attack crews
- Funding for pre-positioning of structural resources

Approximately $30 million annually represents the needed funding investment to assure Oregon is ready to respond to the increased and elevated risk both at local levels and to manage large, complex incidents. This critical funding is reoccurring and will need to be built into base budgets and Special Purpose Appropriations.

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Potential Actionable Items:

A. Fully fund both ODF and OSFM's fire protection base budget, severity and large fire support needs through the creation of an Oregon Wildfire Fund.

B. Direct the agencies to develop necessary policy option packages for inclusion in the 2021 Governor's Recommended Budget. Recommend necessary position authorization be placed in the base budget for each agency. Could consider a phased or multi-biennial approach for implementation.

C. Recommend allocating additional state funding to the Special Purpose Appropriation for aviation resources including; next generation air tankers, helitack, lead plane, and single engine air tankers for 2021.

6. Funding

A) Create the Oregon Wildfire Fund

Problem Statement:

The current funding structure does not meet or address the reality of wildfire risk, costs, and impacts in Oregon.

For Oregon to be successful in protecting Oregonians, our communities, and natural resources from wildfire, the state must look to new funding models to fully fund the programs and agencies responsible for this work.

Oregon must prepare for increasingly complex and severe fire seasons by planning, budgeting, and allocating additional financial resources. Aside from landowner contributions via the Oregon Forestland Protection Fund (OFPF), no large-scale dedicated funding currently exists to cover these projected costs. With no dedicated fund, agency budgets are forced to cover the entire gross costs of wildfire response on an emergency and annual basis. During severe fire seasons, ODF must take out lines of credit and loans before accessing the General Fund. These loans accrue interest and are often required to be paid before reimbursements are received. Additionally, reimbursement of large fire costs from FEMA and other federal agencies takes years, requiring state agencies to carry fire-cost debts until reimbursed.

Currently, between ODF and OSFM, only $10.25 million is dedicated and budgeted annually for large fire costs ($10 million from OFPF and $0.25 million from the Fire Insurance Premium Tax). In recent years, this dedicated budget has only covered about 10 percent of large fire costs. This model is not sustainable.

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Policy Statement:

Recommend a dedicated fund be established for the benefit of all Oregonians to accommodate the increasing cost of wildfire response by ODF and OSFM. A broad base of support to build the Oregon Wildfire Fund is necessary to ensure a viable long-term solution.

Oregon's wildfire funding sources must be adequate to budget for all agencies responsible for wildfire prevention, mitigation, suppression, and recovery. Dedicated funding must be in addition to current base and severity level funding, and should be shouldered by all Oregonians equitably.

Funding should be dedicated and sustainable over the long-term. This is not a one-time investment.

Committee Recommendation to Council:

The Governor, legislature, and stakeholders should create a proposal, funding concept, and strategy for the 2021 Legislative Assembly. In addition to what currently exists, determine sustainable, equitable, long-term, and dedicated funding sources to create and replenish the Oregon Wildfire Fund.

Funding amounts should be based on both current and projected future needs. Consideration should be given to constitutionally protecting the Oregon Wildfire Fund from sweeps. Considerations could also include investments in proactive wildfire mitigation activities as available.

To ensure proper governance of the Oregon Wildfire Fund, a board should be established. Board membership should include representatives of the ODF, OSFM, key branches of government and stakeholders.

Funds should be available to the ODF and OSFM for reimbursement of large fire costs, base level budgets, and severity needs.

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Potential Actionable Items:

A. Request the Governor work with legislative leadership to craft a bill for the 2021 legislative session establishing the Oregon Wildfire Fund. Funding amounts should double the five-year average for ODF and OSFM gross fire costs, and be maintained and replenished over time.

B. Identify and dedicate specific funding sources to the Oregon Wildfire Fund, above and beyond the existing structure.

C. Funds should be available to pay for ODF and OSFM base level of protection, severity and large fire costs. When funds exceed the threshold established above, additional investment opportunities should include; investments in the protection system and mitigation and recovery activities. Any program income via mitigation activities will be directly reinvested into the Oregon Wildfire Fund.

D. To fully fund the Oregon Wildfire Fund, consideration could be given to a phased or multi-biennial approach for implementation.

E. Evaluate distribution of OSFM's standard funding mechanism, Fire Insurance Premium Tax, to ensure distribution prioritizes fire suppression and fire related programs.

F. Direct OSFM to create legislative concept requiring the agency report out their large fire costs annually to ensure those costs are accurate and encompass Oregon fire response as a whole.

B) Landowner Contributions

Problem Statement:

Landowners in Oregon pay for fire protection preparedness, suppression, severity resources, and large-fire costs. Over time, costs have increased to cover the increasing needs for fire response and severity of fire seasons, straining the ability to maintain working forests in Oregon. While this structure was historically logical, fire season severity, risks and impact to all Oregonians have shifted with time. Oregon's landowners cannot be expected to pay necessary increases to wildfire suppression costs.

Recent legislation and changes highlight this: A significant part of the Wildfire Protection Act emphasized the cost of fire protection is outpacing the ability to generate the revenue from some forestlands. This led to the state paying for a portion of the base level of protection. As more fires are started by the public, the burden of paying for suppression should be adequately shared with the public.

Policy Statement:

Landowner assessments should be stabilized and fire suppression costs should be distributed equitably among all Oregonians.

Committee Recommendation to Council:

Increased investments and fire suppression costs should be funded by Oregonians. Considerations include state General Fund or other public funding sources.

Potential Actionable Items:

A. Landowner contributions should be stabilized at the base level of protection with predicable cost increases long-term through access to the Oregon Wildfire Fund.

B. Through current existing fiscal budget processes, as landowner cost increases are necessary, pro-rata costs should not exceed Consumer Price Index (CPI) West Region. Additional costs in base budgets over CPI should be funded from the Oregon Wildfire Fund.

C) Access to Alternative Emergency Interim Funding

Problem Statement:

There is currently no large-scale dedicated funding to cover projected large fire costs. With no dedicated fund, the State General Fund and agency budgets are forced to cover these costs on an emergency basis. The current structure is costly and challenges ODF's ability to plan, budget, manage cash flow, and make timely payments to vendors.

In 2018 alone, gross large fire costs totaled well over $100 million. To pay these bills and continue normal operations, ODF has borrowed, via loans and lines of credit, from the Oregon State Treasury. These temporary borrowings help address cash flow deficits, but accrue interest costs and are oftentimes required to be repaid before sustainable reimbursement funding is received—adding pressure to an already strained system. Reimbursement of the large fire costs from FEMA and other federal agencies takes years. OSFM large fire costs are covered by OSP's budget until reimbursements are received. This has and can cause funding authorization limitations for the agencies.

Policy Statement:

Until a the Oregon Wildfire Fund is established, agencies must be able to access practical and viable interim funding alternatives to cover costs not part of, or budgeted for, in normal agency budgets.

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Committee Recommendation to Council:

The Department of Forestry and Office of State Fire Marshal should work with the Governor's office, the Chief Financial Office, the Legislative Fiscal Office, the Oregon State Treasury, and stakeholders to prepare a concept for the 2020 Legislative Assembly allowing agencies to access emergency interim funding.

Potential Actionable Items:

A. Recommend that the Department of Forestry work with the Governor's office, the Chief Financial Office, the Legislative Fiscal Office, the Oregon State Treasury, and stakeholders to prepare a concept for the 2020 session allowing both ODF and OSFM to access practical and viable emergency interim funding.

7. Future Needs Analysis

A) Oregon Fire Response

Problem Statement:

While the previous recommendations will bring Oregon fire response agencies up to the necessary standard to meet current needs, it is imperative for the system to adapt as wildfires continue to pose greater threats to all Oregonians. To ensure efficient and effective wildfire response moving forward, a future analysis and needs assessment must be conducted.

To fully address how Oregon responds to incidents including wildfire, a statewide benchmarking and analysis project is necessary. Work to identify gaps, and areas of improvement through a systematic process is needed to establish long-term improvements.

The current model has not been fully evaluated against other models and does not have an established process for systematic review. Without addressing capacity as the risks change, Oregon will continue to be challenged by incident response.

Policy Statement:

A strong and effective fire system in Oregon is paramount to the health and well-being of all Oregonians and the Oregon Way. A systematic review is needed to fully address how Oregon responds to incidents such as wildfires.

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Committee Recommendation to Council:

A statewide analysis of the entire response model in Oregon must be completed to ensure the state can meet the growing needs. A thorough analysis should utilize the benchmarking process to drive analysis, beginning with work to define the expectations and requirements of a successful system. A review of the current response model should be conducted to identify OSFM's and ODF's authorities, policies, priorities, and operational models. The analysis should consider a review of organizational structures and oversight. During the process, input should be sought from agency stakeholders and partners, including Oregon's structural fire service.

Potential Actionable Items:

A. Direct the OSFM and ODF to conduct statewide analysis to evaluate the fire system.

B. Provide funding for two limited-duration employees to review the Oregon fire system as described above.

C. Report and recommendations should be provided to the Governor, Legislature, State Forester, State Fire Marshal, and Oregon Fire Chiefs Association within one year. An implementation plan will be developed for approved recommendations, which may require future funding.

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