



Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District
“Protecting Life and Property through Quality Service”

October 17, 2017

Oregon Smoke Management Review Committee
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

Smoke Management Review Committee,

The Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District provides structural and wildland fire response as well as advanced life support ambulance services to the communities of Sisters and Camp Sherman Oregon. During the past five years our fire district has experienced seven large wildland fires which threatened our district and residents. Both the Pole Creek Fire in 2012 and Milli Fire of 2017 burned over 20,000 acres causing catastrophic damage to national forests and wildlife habitat. The impacts of these fires were also felt by local businesses who saw a significant decrease in tourism as a result of the dense smoke in our community. Many businesses reported 30-50 percent reductions in sales during the Milli Fire this year from the same period last year.

In addition to the impacts to forests, wildlife and local businesses, one of our communities' most successful non-profit organizations was significantly impacted this year as a result of hazardous smoke from the Milli Fire. The Sisters Folk Festival was cancelled due to health concerns for performers, volunteers and participants. The cancellation of the Sisters Folk Festival will have a significant impact on our community and school age children. The Sisters Folk Festival provides funding to support music education programs in our schools and brings thousands of visitors into town, boosting our local economy.

It is for these reasons that the Board of Directors of the Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District supports changes to the Oregon Smoke Management Plan that would allow increased use of prescribed fire to reduce fuel loading in our forests. Specifically we support recommendations made by the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project which include:

- Incorporate language that reflects differences between dry and wet forests and their respective fire regimes.

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- Align Oregon's smoke policy with EPA's empirically-based 24-hour air quality standard.
- Prioritize high-risk/high-value treatment areas, such as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones, with maximum flexibility and opportunity to implement prescribed fire.
- Develop and implement a public health strategy to protect people from short-duration prescribed fire smoke.

We are hopeful that changes to the Oregon Smoke Management plan are made and that our forests are returned to a safer and healthier condition. We are also hopeful that our community is no longer threatened every summer from wildland fires and the resulting hazardous smoke during peak tourist season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chuck Newport". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chuck Newport
President
Board of Directors
Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District