

Senate Natural Resources & Wildfire. 9.27.23

Meeting webpage & link to hearing:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202311/Committees/SNR/2023-09-27-08-30/Agenda>

Wildfire and Forestry Workgroup Update

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Senate District 17

Doug Grafe, Wildfire and Military Advisor, Office of Governor Tina Kotek

Steiner - Trust is the system is non-existent. Issues are greater.

\$15m fund to provide offsets for taxes paid for fire protection patrol on rangeland and timberland.

Intended to be one time but rates for landowners were going to go up significantly.

Convene workgroup of landowners affected by this and harvest tax. To see how to go forward.

Complexities of the funding. P 3

Despite complexities, the system works well to fight fire.

Further work will be continuing on this subject to find a future funding formula.

Girod – Do we need more equipment? Do we wait for federal interceding?

Grafe – Nation’s strategy on wildfire. We did increase capacity that we need to work with federal fire partners. We protect our lands and provide support on Federal.

Landscape resiliency was another investment to get ahead of catastrophic risk.

Federal delegation is working with state to protect interest of the infrastructure bill to bring dollars to Oregon. Close to \$100m in infrastructure funding to mitigate wildfire (??).

Golden – draft map introduced. Continual concern on federal lands. Letting the public know how we dovetail with federal efforts is important.

Girod – need a lot more equipment, air defense. Forming a coalition with Washington and BC have a sizable fleet for this purpose?

Grafe – do we have this authority? Yes we do. NW Compact. For purposes of resources. Military assets also available. Severity program also increased. Also increases in 2023.

Brock Smith – We have to do something different. More wilderness is being burned. Most on federal landscape. We need more management of our forestland.

Golden in closing – overall praise for suppression work.

Some misunderstanding or over simplistic views on landowners assessment. Regarding how much landowners should be paying. This is just one slice of a very significant wildfire challenge. 762 was just a first step. Real concern is fire adapted communities. Most challenging part of the program.

*ODF also reported on their Landscape Resiliency Programs and progress.

House Climate, Energy 9.27.23

Hearing webpage including link to hearing:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202311/Committees/HCEE/2023-09-27-14-30/Agenda>

SB 762 and SB 80 update

Chair Marsh – looking to see if further investments are needed?

Doug Grafe – overview of bills and reviewing Policy Council Report from July 2023.

Funding reductions that occurred in the most recent budget cycle -

\$13m of wildfire funding was reduced to zero across public health agencies for smoke concerns – DEQ, OHA, ODHS

Reductions in 2023

\$87m to \$13m for OSFM

- \$55m was in response category. But \$25m was one time only funding for purchase of equipment. An Anticipated reduction/investment.
- \$32m down to \$3m for community risk reduction to OSFM
- \$15m for landowner offset removed but is in a continual discussion via Senator Steiner and interim workgroup
- \$2 to detection camera program was not moved forward in this biennium. Moved to \$0
- Landscape resiliency reduced but not eliminated

Investments in 2023

- \$5 for landscape prescribed fire program – and limited liability limitations for promotion of prescribed fire.
- \$12m Multi mission aircraft program – to replace aging apparatus
- Proactive funding to support large fire costs – generally going to E Board but carrying debt is a challenge.
- \$6m carried forward from home hardening program to assist individuals who lost homes in 2020. Expanded to 2020 and 2021 fire season victim.

Dylan Kruse – Sustainable NW

Wildfire insurance is the next big obstacle. Insurers leaving the state, not providing coverage, dropping consumers.

SB 80 was an important first step. Not required to provide coverage but can insurers continue to provide coverage and offer incentives.

Possible opportunities in Inflation Reduction Act – community benefit, forest resiliency, wildfire response

What's missing?

- Community preparedness and mitigation – policy holder active work can make a difference but we are not investing enough. There is no state home hardening program at this time. Only new construction.
- Landscape resiliency at scale. \$10m in landscape and \$2m in small landowner. Frustration with Federal government but more to be done at state level for state owned lands
- Smoke mitigation

We have been responsive – we need to be proactive.

Investment comparison

Washington \$118m

Oregon \$42m

California \$1.2b

Federal funding opportunities are key – but have to be jumped on now.

Sustainable NW Priorities

- Invest in/enable agency capacity and leverage federal funds
- Invest in community risk reduction and public health
- Scale up forest restoration and prescribed fire
- Fix the suppression gap
- Address long term funding

Levy – Sits on SNW Board

How do we get Federal gov't have same passion for suppression?

- Doug – 14 large fires burning today and most on federal land. We work closely with Fed to protect our interests. Where we have treated lands, that picture tells us a lot. They are not as catastrophic. Same strategies apply Federal and State. The Infrastructure bill applied funds for that work.
- Dylan – time to call the question? Can you meet us there?

Andersen

Up front work is important. Anything we can help you to do is terrific. Thank you.

Pham

What can the state do for you right now?

- Tweak on prescribed fire. Bill coming on this. If there are additional resources to invest in advance to invest in at risk areas that is a priority. Federal investment.
- Reports contain catalog of future opportunities

Senate Veterans, Emergency Management & Federal and Foreign Affairs 9.28.23

Hearing webpage: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202311/Committees/SVEMFW/2023-09-28-08-30/Agenda>

2023 wildfire season

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202311/Committees/SVEMFW/2023-09-28-08-30/MeetingMaterials>

Linthicum – what about the 7 conflagrations. Takes about a year to finally determine what it looks like.

- Human caused. Under investigation. 75% caused by humans. During lightening 75% is due to lightening.

Gorsek – difference in wildland and structural FF

- Emergency support function 4. Fire response. ODF is wildland. OSFM brings structural response. We come together and collaborate.

Gorsek – set of standards for fire fighting. Does that tie into fire fighting?

- We use NFPA for our standards. NWCG on wildland. Structural required to meet those.

Woods - pipeline for training

- Across all FF, we are seeing a decline in individuals interested in this career. Decline in volunteerism. Obstacles – four months, cost, time, national problem.

Woods – why reduction?

- Many research studies. Trend is people not doing over time shifts. Wear and tear. A lot put on our responders. Not picking up extra shirts. Mandatory call backs. Can send research.

Gorsek – have we seen backlogs of training through DPSST?

- For the fire side, we have not seen that. Voluntary certification in Oregon.