



Advancing Fire Protection In Oregon

Wildfire Programs Advisory Council Annual Report
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 2025



Glossary of Acronyms

20YLRs	Oregon's 20-Year Landscape Resiliency Strategy
BCD	Building Codes Division
CRP	Community response plans for smoke
CWPP	Community wildfire protection plan
BCD	Building Codes Division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services
DCBS	Department of Consumer and Business Services
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality
DFR	Division of Financial Regulation of the Department of Consumer and Business Services
DLCD	Department of Land Conservation and Development
HB	(Oregon) House Bill
HECC	Higher Education Coordinating Commission
IBHS	Institute for Business and Home Safety
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NHMP	Natural hazards mitigation plan
OAR	Oregon Administrative Rule
OCC	Oregon Conservation Corps
ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
ODHS	Oregon Department of Human Services
OEM	Oregon Department of Emergency Management
OREM	Office of Resilience and Emergency Management of the Oregon Department of Human Services
OHA	Oregon Health Authority
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute
ORSC	Oregon Residential Specialty Code
OSFM	Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal
OSMP	Oregon Smoke Management Program
OSU	Oregon State University
PM2.5	Particulate matter 2.5
R327	Oregon Residential Specialty Code: R327.4 Wildfire Hazard Mitigation
RFPA	Rangeland Fire Protection Association
RFPD	Rural Fire Protection District
SB	(Oregon) Senate Bill
SSRA	Smoke Sensitive Receptor Areas
WUI	Wildland-urban interface

Executive Summary

Oregon faces increasing risks and effects of wildfire. In response to the growing concern over wildfire and its effects, in January 2019 Oregon Governor Kate Brown convened the Governor's Council on Wildfire Response to assess the issue and provide policy and funding recommendations to the Governor and State Legislature. This was followed by the devastating Labor Day fires of 2020. Responding to these recommendations and recognizing the need to make Oregonians and their communities safer and more wildfire prepared and resilient, the Oregon Legislature enacted Senate Bill 762 (SB 762) in the 2021 legislative session. SB 762 set an unprecedented path for 11 state agencies to implement multiple programs intended to transform how Oregon lives with wildfire. Subsequent legislation increased state agency engagement in this work. These programs work together to modernize fire preparedness and response systems, creating new opportunities to advance fire protection at multiple scales from the individual to the landscape. However, many of these programs have since been one-time, defunded, or partially funded. Other programs received substantial, durable funding investments in the 2025 legislative session, helping to address the dire challenge of wildfire suppression costs and the need for increased mitigation.

In 2024, the legislature adopted Senate Bill 5701 (SB 5701) directing the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to convene a workgroup to identify solutions for sustainable wildfire mitigation and suppression funding to address the growing wildfire crisis. This wildfire funding workgroup, colloquially known as the Fire 35, convened in the summer of 2024.

In response to the recommendations of the Fire 35 workgroup, the 2025 legislature passed House Bill 3940 (HB 3940) to address wildfire funding. Coupled with one-time funding in House Bill 5006 (HB 5006) and funding provided within agency budget bills, the legislature allocated a total of \$271 million for the biennium for wildfire funding.

State-level policy changes were also made by the legislature in 2025, including Senate Bill 83 (SB 83) and Senate Bill 85 (SB 85), addressing community risk reduction and the insurance crisis, respectively. SB 83 (2025) repealed the state wildfire hazard map and the associated state level regulatory requirements for defensible space and use of wildfire resilient building materials standards that would have applied to new construction of one- and two-family dwellings within high wildfire hazard areas of the state. The 2025 legislature instead established alternative wildfire mitigation programs accompanied by permanent funding.

SB 85 (2025), together with Senate Bill 82 (2023) (SB 82) and other related statutes, address the state's growing insurance crisis, including affordability and access. Together, these key pieces of legislation have enhanced transparency and strengthened consumer protection. SB 82 provides enhancements to disclosures so that consumers know exactly why their policy might not be getting renewed or why their rate might be going up—as well as descriptions of wildfire mitigation actions the consumer could take to improve the property's insurability. SB 82 also requires insurers to post information on their public facing websites about how wildfire risk mitigation actions may impact rating and underwriting decisions. SB 85 will provide recommendations related to wildfire risk mitigation for additional legislative changes to further improve affordability and availability of insurance.

SB 762 (2021) also established a Wildfire Programs Director and Wildfire Programs Advisory Council (Council) to guide implementation. The Council is charged with monitoring progress of wildfire programs, advising and assisting the Director, and preparing an annual October report to the Governor and appropriate committees or interim committees of the Oregon Legislative Assembly. This report describes implementation progress to date and specifically provides advice and recommendations on:

- Activities related to wildfire prevention and response, including receiving and evaluating agency reports related to wildfire prevention and response.
- Potential changes to the activities in order to fulfill the goal of dramatically reducing wildfire risk in this state and ensuring that regional defensible space, building codes, and land use applications are appropriate.
- Strengthening intergovernmental and multiparty collaboration and enhancing collaboration between governments and stakeholders on an ongoing basis.
- Developing strategies to enhance collaboration among governmental bodies and the general public.

This fourth annual (2025) report fulfills SB 762's reporting requirement for the Council.¹ It represents the efforts of Council members and agency support staff. It was developed through a collaborative process centered around three workgroups focused on:

1. Funding assessment (Wildfire Funding Workgroup "Fire 35", HB 3940, and HB 5006)
2. Local adoption of community wildfire risk reduction strategies (SB 83)
3. Insurance assessment—keeping coverage within reach (SB 85)

Additionally, other wildfire program areas, including smoke management and public health and utilities, were discussed by the Council.

Council Recommendations and Actions Necessary to Implement

The Council has developed several broad, cross-cutting recommendations to advance fire-adapted communities and landscape resiliency in Oregon. These are relevant to multiple wildfire programs, involve multiple agencies and sectors, and will require an all-hands approach.

- **Continue to respond to the wildfire funding challenge:** Recent wildfire seasons demonstrate that adequate funding for wildfire mitigation and response continues to be a challenge, with costs escalating at the same time that adequate funding continues to be constrained. To partially address this trend, the 2025 Oregon Legislature created new and durable revenue sources for wildfire mitigation, expanded existing fire protection assessments, and proactively increased general fund appropriations for suppression costs. With the passage of HB 3940, the Landscape Resiliency Fund and Community Risk Reduction Fund saw increased appropriations while a new Large Wildfire Fund was created but no funds were appropriated. Landowner fire protection rate relief was established, fire protection assessments on tribal fee lands were clarified, and rural fire protection assessments were expanded, among other funding solutions. The bill created important institutional infrastructure (dedicated funds, new programs, revised governance) that can be scaled up, but requires significant additional revenue and sustained commitment to achieve adequate wildfire protection for Oregon. Additional one-time investments in wildfire mitigation and response were allocated through HB 5006 as a special purpose appropriation, with a focus on the mitigation of risk and impacts both before and after wildfire. Wildfire response and mitigation broadly affect Oregonians and involve multiple agencies and sectors; therefore, continued collaboration and integrated programming will be required. While essential, funding solutions should not solely address mitigation, response, and suppression. Adaptation, recovery, public health, youth workforce training, and outreach and education, including that which supports local adoption of strategies for community risk reduction, also need investment.

¹ Prior Council reports are available at: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/pages/wildfire-programs-council.aspx>

- **Prioritize state investments and treatments based on equity and vulnerability considerations:** Investments should prioritize the most socially and economically vulnerable communities and landscapes in high hazard areas. This includes prioritizing community risk reduction investments, such as defensible space and home hardening, and landscape treatments in the WUI, as well as large landscape treatments that can moderate fire behavior. Continued funding must be provided to support and improve community preparedness and resilience, including public health. These must incorporate equity considerations to ensure that the most socially and economically vulnerable individuals and populations are served and have access to resources to mitigate, respond to, and recover from impacts from wildfire.
- **Provide stable, predictable funding to state and local partners for coordinated and collaborative public education and outreach:** Funding that furthers efforts to develop and deliver community wildfire adaptation training and bolster coordinated delivery of consistent messaging and effective education and outreach strategies will elevate Oregonian's understanding of the importance of community risk reduction and landscape resilience, helping to embed a culture of preparedness. Increased understanding at the individual, neighborhood, and community scale will increase participation and build support for implementation of locally adopted defensible space standards, home hardening building codes, and supportive land use strategies.
- **Allow time for wildfire programs to mature and outcomes to be realized:** With the repeal of the wildfire hazard map and new approach for local adoption of community wildfire risk reduction strategies, time will be needed to understand opportunities for and barriers to local implementation and see the effects of home hardening and defensible space efforts. New voluntary standards for homes and neighborhoods currently being piloted will need to be evaluated for efficacy and broader implementation, including how these strategies help to support access to insurance.
- **Increase investment in public health agencies and their coordination with land management agencies:** Public health agencies and local community organizations need, and have not had, sustainable, sufficient funding to provide education and resources that can address health impacts of wildfire. Local public health agencies and organizations must also receive investment. Public health and land management agencies must be funded and encouraged to increase their coordination, which is necessary to address the intersection of public health challenges from smoke and the need to increase landscape resiliency through treatments that produce smoke (i.e., prescribed and beneficial fire use). This is important both within and outside of the WUI as smoke can have broad impacts. Public health investments can be addressed through an overall stable and sustainable funding solution.
- **Invest in multiple forms of workforce development and retention:** The scale of a trained workforce to implement land management activities, prescribed fire, and wood products processing is insufficient for the scope of wildfire risk reduction needed. Consistent, dedicated funding is necessary to address a critical workforce development gap in wildfire suppression and response. This includes a cross-trained prescribed fire workforce, investment in the Oregon Conservation Corps, and opportunities to keep seasonal fire fighters employed full time through cross-training and cooperative agreements.
- **Implement policies to help keep insurance coverage within reach:** Ensuring that Oregonians have access to quality, affordable, residential, commercial and industrial property insurance in the face of escalating wildfire risk is both urgent and complex. As climate-driven disasters grow more frequent in the west, families and communities need reliable coverage to live, rebuild, and recover. Ensuring that insurance coverage remains within reach of Oregonians requires the state to strike a balance. Oregon must foster a healthy insurance market that encourages competition and innovation, provides sustainable underwriting models, while also maintaining regulatory guardrails to protect consumers from unnecessary cancellations, unaffordable premiums, unsustainable underwriting models, or opaque underwriting practices. As the state's wildfire program evolves, Oregonians who take proactive measures to protect their homes and neighbors from wildfire should have this reflected in reducing their property's wildfire risk. A successful and resilient system will account for mitigation, ensure transparency, preserve access, and maintain a healthy marketplace for insurers, especially in rural and other wildfire-prone areas.

In addition to these broad recommendations, the Council makes the following specific recommendations for the continued success of wildfire programs in Oregon (Table 1). For the recommendations, legislative action is needed to consider appropriate funding and policy, and/or the responsible agencies will review to determine the action needed. A summary of each recommendation is included below, with further detail found in the corresponding report section.

Table 1. Summary of Wildfire Programs Advisory Council Recommendations, October 2025

Responsible Agencies	Council recommendations - <i>Legislative action is needed to consider appropriate funding and policy, and/or responsible agencies should review to determine needed action.</i>
ODF, OSFM	Funding Assessment (Section 2): Suppression and Response • Fund ODF’s Large Wildfire Fund and OSFM’s Mobilization Fund at their respective 5-year trailing average net costs, rather than making funding available through Emergency Board requests. • Request that OSFM to work with RFPDs and taxing districts to provide a report quantifying the revenue raised from the new assessment policy under HB 3940 (2025). • Provide sustained funding and support for ODF aviation, early detection, and technology programs as critical tools to limit the impact of wildfire on communities and natural resources. • Fund centralized administration costs for ODF in the second year of the 2025-2027 biennium; consider during the short legislative session.
ODF, OSFM	Funding Assessment (Section 2): Mitigation • Increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire as an effective tool for wildfire fuel reduction. • Current funding for liability protection available to Certified Burn Managers conducting prescribed fire treatments is insufficient to support the needed pace and scale of fuel treatments using beneficial fire. Allocated funding should scale with the acres under ODF protection or otherwise eligible lands (i.e., tribal lands) to have a covered burn take place. • Mitigation should also be defined as efforts that will increase forest and rangeland wildfire resilience in preparation for and response to wildfire. These definitions may need to be addressed in statute or associated agency administrative rules. • OSFM should expand community risk reduction efforts to include neighborhood-scale planning, property ingress and egress, apparatus accessibility, and maintenance for low-income residents. If statute limits eligibility, policy changes should be considered. • As mitigation grant programs are developed or reviewed, they should include maintenance considerations to ensure those projects continue to add benefit over time. ODF and OSFM should consider giving a certain portion of grant program awards for maintenance projects. • ODF and OSFM mitigation projects should prioritize funding for communities identified as socially and economically vulnerable by providing sliding-scale cost sharing based on household income, multilingual education and outreach programs, and mobile home park mitigation programs, including renter protection. • The legislature should consider creating an endowment structure for long-term landscape maintenance funding. • Consider broadening new reporting requirements under HB 3940 to reflect the impacts of large wildfires on landscape resilience measurements.

Responsible Agencies	Council recommendations - <i>Legislative action is needed to consider appropriate funding and policy, and/or responsible agencies should review to determine needed action.</i>
OSU, ODF, OSFM, OHA, DEQ, DLCD, local jurisdictions	Local Adoption of Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategies (Section 3): Public Education and Outreach • Provide stable, predictable biennial funding to enable the OSU Extension Fire Program, State Agencies and partners to continue efforts to develop an Oregon-tailored community wildfire adaptation training for practitioners and lead educational training in safe and effective prescribed fire use. • With the passage of HB 3940 (2025), ODF and OSFM will now have dedicated and durable funding for educational opportunities to implement Oregon's 20-Year Landscape Resiliency Strategy and Community Risk Reduction Programs. These programs should prioritize projects that include robust education and outreach strategies intended to engage socially and economically vulnerable people and communities, including using wildfire hazard and Social Vulnerability Index data to prioritize work. • Provide additional investments for local governments to hold outreach and community meetings to help Oregonians, especially socially and economically vulnerable people, implement locally adopted defensible space standards and home hardening building codes. • Communications should be designed and coordinated to provide consistent messaging across organizations in a manner that is accessible to socially and economically vulnerable people, including diverse language-speakers.
OSFM, OSU, local jurisdictions	Local Adoption of Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategies (Section 3): Defensible Space • Continuous public outreach and education is essential to encourage habit formation and social acceptance of defensible space activities. This need is particularly acute in areas that may be resistant to regulation. While the funds and basic materials should come from the state, including OSU Extension Fire Program, OSFM Fire Risk Reduction Specialists, and/or local governments, it is critical that trusted, local partners and/or institutions are funded to actually carry out the outreach. • An ongoing feedback loop should be established by OSFM and local implementing partners to monitor the efficacy of defensible space programs, using standard evaluation criteria. Jurisdictions adopting the model code should develop metrics to track success and determine where there is a positive return on investment to further prioritize and fine tune the delivery of assistance.
OSFM, BCD, OSU, local jurisdictions	Local Adoption of Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategies (Section 3): Home Hardening • Continue to invest in helping Oregonians voluntarily comply with R327, including coordinating education amongst local governments and key wildland fire prevention and mitigation educators. • Prioritize grant funding to communities with the most need, considering the local regulatory structure and whether the community is located in a wildfire hazard area. • The state should help connect property owners to other sources of possible funding for home hardening and educational sources to improve decision-making. • Consider the home hardening grant program recommendations in the OSFM and BCD September 2024 report² for opportunities to expand grant applicability and eligibility requirements, including retrofit of existing homes.

² <https://www.oregon.gov/bcd/Documents/5989-proposal-proactive-home-hardening-grant-program.pdf>

Responsible Agencies	Council recommendations - <i>Legislative action is needed to consider appropriate funding and policy, and/or responsible agencies should review to determine needed action.</i>
	• Because BCD's fire home hardening code provisions apply only to new one and two-family dwellings under current state law, direct BCD to develop a commercial code path for local adoption that would apply to commercial and multi-family buildings. • While federal pre-emption currently prevents BCD from creating construction requirements for manufactured homes, the relevant agencies should explore other methods to encourage or require hardening of manufactured homes, including a targeted education plan. • OSFM and BCD should collect data to better understand the extent and effectiveness of home hardening. While the Council does not recommend creating additional permit requirements to track this, there might be other methods to achieve this monitoring.
DLCD, OSFM	Local Adoption of Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategies (Section 3): Land use • The Council endorses DLCD's proposal to develop a wildfire adapted communities land use guide / model code. • Provide funding for technical assistance grants for local governments wanting to adopt or adapt the land use guide/model code. • Funds should be provided to enable DLCD to move forward with other recommendations in the <i>Wildfire Adapted Communities Recommendations Report</i>³ related to transportation planning to support safe evacuation and response, and coordination of Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan processes and adoption of policies and actions into comprehensive plans and codes. • Ensure that land use measures are integrated into and consistent with community and state level actions to fulfill the MOU with the IBHS.
HECC	Local Adoption of Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategies (Section 3): Oregon Conservation Corps • Continue to fund the OCC program at the HECC, providing stable, predictable biennial funding so OCC can plan ahead, retain staff, and deliver consistent fuels reduction statewide. This addresses a critical workforce development gap in wildfire suppression and response. • Establish a permanent OCC trust fund or endowment, seeded by the state and grown through philanthropy, to ensure long-term stability. HECC should continue to encourage public-private matching to maximize every state dollar. • Expand training and certification opportunities so participants leave with marketable skills for careers in firefighting, forestry, conservation, and emergency response. • Strengthen youth pathways by funding summer OCC academies tied to high schools and community colleges, creating a "second-year crew leader" track for returning participants, and supporting career counseling and recruitment for students not pursuing four-year degrees. • Designate OCC as a preferred partner for fuels projects, coordinating its crews with ODF, OSFM, and local fire districts to ensure safe, strategic, and efficient wildfire risk reduction. • The OCC should seek and support opportunities to collaborate with other entities as appropriate.

³ https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Publications/20220930_DLCD-Wildfire-Recommendations-Report.pdf

Responsible Agencies	Council recommendations - <i>Legislative action is needed to consider appropriate funding and policy, and/or responsible agencies should review to determine needed action.</i>
DFR	Insurance Assessment (Section 4): Advance Data-Driven Consumer Protections • Ensure full execution of SB 85’s framework for evaluating whether wildfire mitigation strategies, including defensible space, home hardening, and community-level resilience programs, should result in more affordable insurance coverage for consumers. • Allocate resources to support adoption of mitigation standards through financial assistance, technical support, and public education. • The legislature should encourage the insurance industry to recognize investment made by property owners by aligning their mitigation efforts with underwriting incentives, premium considerations, and risk-scoring models. • The legislature should encourage the insurance industry to promote transparency in how mitigation data is collected, evaluated, and used to inform coverage decisions—ensuring that consumers understand the benefits and trade-offs. • Maintain legislative oversight to ensure SB 85 delivers actionable findings and scalable solutions within a realistic timeline.
DFR	Insurance Assessment (Section 4): Expand Consumer Protections Across Property Types • Consider creating statutory safeguards similar to, as appropriate, those extended to residential property insurance in SB 82 (2023) for agricultural, industrial, and commercial property risks, which currently fall outside key transparency and mitigation provisions. This effort would require a large investment for DFR to gain the staffing and expertise to expand protections to commercial and other areas besides personal lines homeowners. • Improve data collection and analysis to monitor urban-rural disparities, track rural insurance trends, and identify emerging gaps in coverage.
DFR	Insurance Assessment (Section 4): Preserve Market Competitiveness and Encourage Innovation • Avoid mandates that restrict modeling inputs or standardize underwriting tools, which could stifle innovation and reduce insurer flexibility. • Support the use of diverse modeling tools and datasets that reflect geographic, structural, and mitigation variability—enabling more accurate risk assessment and competitive pricing. • Engage with industry and consumers to avoid proposals that expose carriers to excessive legal risk for routine underwriting and claims decisions—ensuring continued participation in high-risk areas. • Engage with industry to protect proprietary modeling systems to maintain innovation and ensure a diverse, data-rich insurance landscape. Safeguarding these tools is essential not only for fostering competition and accuracy, but also for upholding the property rights of insurers whose intellectual capital drives market functionality and consumer choice. • Foster a regulatory environment that streamlines compliance, supports innovation, maintains predictable regulatory oversight, and encourages greater insurer investment through economic prosperity.

Responsible Agencies	Council recommendations - <i>Legislative action is needed to consider appropriate funding and policy, and/or responsible agencies should review to determine needed action.</i>
DFR	Insurance Assessment (Section 4): Invest in Public Education and Technical Assistance • Allocate resources to help consumers understand their rights, coverage options, and available mitigation support. • Prioritize outreach to rural, tribal, low-income, and other historically underserved communities to ensure equitable access to insurance and resilience programs.
DFR and partners	Insurance Assessment (Section 4): Encourage Collaborative, Flexible Policy Development • Promote collaboration between consumers, insurers, regulators, policymakers, and related industries. • Avoid approaches that risk unintended consequences and market disruption.
DEQ, OHA, ODHS, BCD, OEM, ODF, local public health agencies and organizations	Other Wildfire Programs (Section 5): Smoke Management and Public Health • Renew funding to DEQ for wildfire and prescribed fire smoke mitigation work, including: ◦ Funds to support communities with developing Community Response Plans and to deploy additional air quality sensors to fill in the gaps in Oregon’s ambient monitoring network. ◦ Grant funds for local governments and entities seeking engagement in Community Smoke Response Planning to further develop and implement these plans. • DEQ should prioritize funding for Community Smoke Response Plans. • DEQ should partner with other agencies and institutions to utilize existing smoke monitoring data. • Provide sustainable, sufficient funding for public health agencies and organizations to provide education and resources that can address the health impacts of smoke, including support for regionwide coordination. • Continue to provide sustainable funding for local health departments through the Public Health Modernization funding source. • The ODF Smoke Fund used to pay for smoke management and to support prescribed burning across the state will end the year in a deficit for the first time. Consider using mitigation funds as a potential source to backfill budget gaps in the program to keep the Smoke Fund viable, rather than increases to current fees. • Efforts to increase housing resilience to fire should also consider how buildings can be improved to be better equipped to maintain clean indoor air during wildfire smoke episodes, which will require significant investment over the long term. This may also include examining policies and practices in congregate settings such as schools and long-term care facilities. • Local mitigation measures should include the following to address the public health concerns of wildfire smoke that often occur independently of wildfire risk to communities: ◦ Renew funding for programs that provide residents access to free or low-cost air purifiers. ◦ Encourage the inclusion of smoke mitigation in Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Natural Hazards Mitigation Plans so that local stakeholders are working collaboratively to manage and respond to the unhealthy smoke exposures during wildfires, as well as shorter-duration smoke that may be present during prescribed fires.



Wildfire Programs Advisory Council

900 Court St NE, Suite 254
Salem, Oregon 97301