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February 3, 2026

To: Senator Golden, Chair, and Members
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

From: Mary Kyle McCurdy, Associate Director

Re: SB 1551: Fire-Hardened Homes

Dear Senator Golden and Committee Members:

1000 Friends of Oregon supports SB 1551. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities, protect family farms, forests and natural areas, and provide transportation and housing choices. Oregon's land use program offers many tools to enable Oregonians, our homes, and communities to live safer with wildfire, as described in our 2018 report, [A New Vision for Wildfire Planning: A Report on Land Use and Wildfires](#). I am currently serving my second four-year term on the state's Wildfire Programs Advisory Committee.

In 2021, in response to the devastating Labor Day fires of 2020, this legislature established the state's first comprehensive wildfire mitigation program, creating a structure across 11 state agencies to coordinate efforts, increase critical investments in wildfire mitigation and safety, and establish much-needed ongoing programs in community wildfire resilience. That legislation also required the state to develop a wildfire hazard map, guiding where public investments, technical assistance, education, and regulations on defensible space and home hardening could be most effectively focused. With the repeal of that map, increasing our wildfire preparedness really rests with individual property owners and communities.

HB 1551 is an important tool in achieving this. Once a wildfire spreads from the wildlands to a neighborhood, which is often due to something as small as flying embers, the materials used to construct homes and fences have a very real impact on how quickly that fire spreads.

Building new homes and retrofitting existing ones according to the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code is cost-effective and greatly reduces the chance of a home catching on fire and from spreading embers to other homes and structures.¹ This protects homes and neighborhoods from wildfire, and it also means firefighters do not need to spread themselves out thinly across multiple developed areas, but rather can focus on the most dangerous hotspots and at-risk people.

Under SB 1551, homeowner associations (HOAs) and similar entities would no longer be able to prohibit installing or maintaining fire-hardened materials on or around one's home and property. HOAs would also no longer be allowed to prohibit the removal of non-fire-hardened fences or other structures from an owner's property. These common sense steps should not be blocked by restrictive covenants, restrictions and conditions in HOA rules.

We urge you to pass SB 1551. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

¹ For example, Headwaters Economics, [*Construction costs for wildfire-resistant homes*](#), October 2025