

February 24, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery
Testimony in Support of SB405 and SB465

I'm writing on behalf of my family -- my two sisters, my stepfather, and my 93 yr old mother (a retired teacher, an artist, and a proud native Oregonian who is descended from at least ten Oregon Trail pioneers, one of whom signed the state constitution).

The McKenzie River is where Mom taught elementary school and where my sisters and I grew up. We moved there eons ago, in 1959. But it was still our family place where we gathered for holidays, birthdays, and Mother's Days. Then September 7th & 8th of last year, home was in the path of the raging Holiday Farm Fire when heavy winds blew seering devastation 30 long miles in less than 24 hours. We're very lucky that emergency alerts were so efficient and effective that Mom and Terry were able to escape with their lives -- while the sky glowed bright red at 2:00AM. Days later, as the heat dissipated, we got confirmation that our home had burned to the ground.

Besides dealing with the emotional trauma of loss, we're helping Mom with temporary housing and with the replacement of her belongings. Meanwhile, we want to consider how to rebuild, and whether it makes sense to use the exact building site or not. Since the homesite is next to the river, and a little creek runs through the property, we want to (and we must) address erosion control and clean water issues. We've joined the PWP Post-Fire Revegetation Project to begin restoring our forest. Meanwhile we must remove hazardous and dead trees, possible hazardous materials, and remove ash and debris from the burned homesite. (That's happening in maybe 30 days? -- or perhaps next week? -- be sure to document the exact location of the foundation first!) While we're thankful for programs that address some of these big issues, it's confusing to navigate the roles of federal, state and county agencies and their shifting timelines. We're not experts. It takes time. Individuals have been helpful, and departments have presented webinars and distributed newsletters. But the maze of regulations and permits and deadlines is daunting, and answers aren't always immediately available. Staff people are overwhelmed; they need more time too.

There are other obstacles, of course. We're not so young any more. We now live 3 hours away from home on the McKenzie. There's the Covid-19 Pandemic getting in our way. And usually when you begin to build a house, you've taken time to percolate a vision of what you want to build; you've considered pros and cons, shape and size, view and site plan. Our needs have changed. We never thought we would have to do this. We need time! Even with four of us dividing the research, time is too short.

SB 405 and SB 465 recognise these real life problems and make it possible to get through them. These bills grant us the time needed for rebuilding in the disaster area. The option for using the old foundation footprint would be allowed. Problems presented by the pandemic could be mitigated. The piles of papers and messages we're generating could be attended to. The provisions of these bills are sorely needed.

Thank you for this opportunity to hope that we can meet the challenges before us!

We strongly support both of these bills.

Faun Hosey
(writing for the Hosey and Liittschwager families)
Washington County and Lane County