

Submitter: JB Demaris
On Behalf Of: Oregonians
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB83

I Oppose SB 83 and -4 and -5 Amendments

Introduction

Senate Bill 83 (SB 83) and its amendments present significant challenges and inefficiencies in addressing wildfire mitigation and related policies. There are key objections to the bill and I propose some actionable recommendations to improve legislative outcomes.

Key Objections to SB 83 and Amendments

1. Overly Lengthy and Unfocused Legislation

SB 83-5, as currently drafted, is excessively long and attempts to address multiple unrelated topics within a single bill. This lack of focus dilutes the effectiveness of the legislation and complicates its implementation. Dividing SB 83-5 into separate bills by topic would allow for more targeted and efficient policymaking.

2. Exclusion of Logging as a Treatment Option

The bill fails to adequately consider logging as a viable and effective treatment option for wildfire mitigation. Logging, when conducted responsibly, can reduce fuel loads, improve forest health, and decrease the risk of catastrophic wildfires. Incorporating logging into the legislative framework would enhance the bill's practical impact.

Additionally, thinning should be allowed in roadless areas as these are the most prone to catastrophic wildfires.

3. Property Owner Report Section

The inclusion of a property owner report section for sale of property is not related to wildfire mitigation and should not be included in this bill to streamline the bill and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies.

4. Repeal of SB 762 and Wildfire Hazard Map Provisions

SB 762 and its associated wildfire hazard map provisions have proven to be contentious and ineffective. The wildfire hazard map, in particular, has faced widespread criticism for its inaccuracies and the undue burden it places on property owners. A clean repeal of SB 762 and the wildfire hazard map provisions is essential to restore fairness and practicality to wildfire legislation.

Recommendations

1. Divide SB 83-5 by Topic

Create separate bills addressing specific issues such as wildfire mitigation, property owner responsibilities, and forest management. This approach will enhance legislative clarity and focus.

2. Include Logging as a Treatment Option

Recognize logging as a critical tool for wildfire risk reduction and forest health improvement. Develop guidelines to ensure sustainable and environmentally responsible logging practices.

3. Remove the Property Owner Report Section

Eliminate this section to reduce administrative burdens and focus resources on actionable wildfire mitigation strategies.

4. Repeal SB 762 and Wildfire Hazard Map Provisions

Draft a new, streamlined bill that repeals SB 762 and eliminates the wildfire hazard map provisions. Focus on practical, evidence-based solutions for wildfire risk reduction.

Conclusion

SB 83 and its amendments, in their current form, fail to address the complexities of wildfire mitigation effectively. By implementing the recommendations outlined here, the legislature can create more focused, practical, and equitable policies that benefit all stakeholders.