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March 26, 2023

Senator Jeff Golden, Chair, and Members
Senate Committee on Natural Resources
State Capitol, OR

Re: SB 80 and – 2 amendment

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 80, including the -2 amendment. 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 choice. I serve as a member of the Wildfire Programs Advisory Council, created by the 2021 legislature under SB 762.

The comprehensive wildfire preparedness bill passed by the 2019 legislature, SB 762, required the Oregon Department of Forestry, working with Oregon State University, to develop a science-based, statewide map of wildfire risk in a very short time period, which they accomplished. However, that legislatively-required short timeline did not enable the extensive outreach and education that should have accompanied it. Senate Bill 80 does that, and more.

Senate Bill 80 directs a re-tooling and re-naming of the map as a Wildfire Hazard Map, while maintaining its scientific integrity of indicating the exposure to wildfire hazard that exists based on landscape-scale climate, weather, topography, and vegetation. This will enable the map to be more effectively used as originally intended: as a guide for where to focus investments, technical assistance, on-the-ground crews, infrastructure protection, evacuation planning, and appropriate regulations to make Oregon families and their communities more wildfire prepared and resilient.

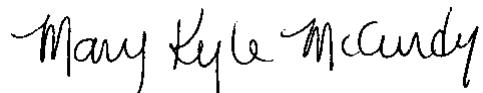
Senate Bill 80 establishes several programs and funding streams to make this a reality:

- The bill requires that the state undertake a robust education and engagement program to explain the map and its purposes, structured to reach all of Oregon's diverse populations across our large state, including using multiple types of visual aids, explaining the hazard map in clear language, using local organizations and civic leaders to reach into communities, and more. The Wildfire Programs Advisory Council has provided specific input on public outreach and education, and we will be engaging closely on that process.

- The Wildfire Hazard Map will identify socially and economically vulnerable communities. Using this information, the state will also undertake specific interactive engagement with these communities to learn their specific needs and concerns, and incorporate them into decisions about home and community level investments and assistance.
- Three funds are established or clarified in the bill: a Landscape Resiliency Fund, a Community Risk Reduction Fund, and a Wildfire Home Preparedness Fund. The Home Preparedness Fund will give funding preference for home retrofitting to those who are in highest wildfire risk areas, those in socially and economically vulnerable communities, low income Oregonians, and those who have lost their home to wildfire.

Wildfire is a naturally occurring part of the western ecosystem, though we have exacerbated it through climate change and human development. Learning to live with wildfire, with preparedness and resiliency, requires an ongoing commitment. Senate Bill 80 builds on the critical work that began with SB 762. We urge your support of SB 80, with the -2 amendment. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director