

Submitter: Tucker Teutsch
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB85

April 29, 2025

?House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment?Oregon State Legislature?900 Court Street NE?Salem, OR 97301
RE: Support for Senate Bill 85 – Neighborhood Protection Cooperative Grant Program

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Firebrand Resiliency Collective (FRC), I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 85, which establishes the Neighborhood Protection Cooperative Grant Program and lays critical groundwork for a wildfire risk reduction certification program in partnership with Oregon's insurance sector.

Firebrand Resiliency Collective is a community-rooted nonprofit based in Southern Oregon, created in the wake of the devastating Almeda and South Obenchain fires of 2020. Through our Ready NOW (Neighborhoods Organized for Wildfire) initiative, we support neighborhood-scale resilience planning through Firewise USA® and other programs, provide no-cost home wildfire risk assessments and hardening incentives, and help communities become recognized for their efforts. However, even when communities take proactive, science-based actions to reduce wildfire risk, they often face significant difficulty in getting these efforts recognized by insurance providers — a persistent hurdle that SB 85 seeks to address. This is a shared goal of our organization, and we are all too familiar with the difficulties. This bill is a much-needed move in the right direction.

We strongly believe SB 85 represents a practical and urgently needed policy response to escalating wildfire risk in Oregon. This legislation will:

- Empower local residents and property owners with grant-funded support to harden homes and neighborhoods;
- Incentivize long-term resilience through insurance-related risk reduction certification;
- Acknowledge and elevate the critical role of community-based organizations and local knowledge in mitigating wildfire impacts.

At FRC, we are already delivering exactly this kind of community-centered wildfire risk reduction work, with funding from sources like the USFS Community Wildfire

Defense Grant program and the Oregon Health Authority's Healthy Homes Grant program. This bill would consolidate and focus this approach. Our experience administering wildfire risk assessments and building neighborhood fire-adapted plans demonstrates that equitable, grassroots implementation is not only possible — it is essential. SB 85's focus on cooperative, locally-led solutions is directly aligned with FRC's vision for inclusive, place-based resilience.

We appreciate the Legislature's recognition that Oregon's wildfire risk is both a public safety and an economic equity issue. With the passage of SB 85, communities like those in Jackson and Josephine counties will be better positioned to reduce risk, access insurance, and build adaptive capacity before the next disaster strikes.

FRC is ready to support the successful implementation of SB 85, and we are already collaborating closely with the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) and the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) through our participation on the state's Insurance Advisory Council and Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Programs Advisory Group. We look forward to continuing this partnership and working together to build out this transformative program.

Thank you for your leadership in advancing this critical legislation.

Sincerely,
Tucker Teutsch,
Executive Director?Firebrand Resiliency Collective
?[contact info redacted]