



February 4, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bills 1551 Written Testimony (Support)

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Fire Marshals Association (OFMA), thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding Senate Bill 1551. OFMA represents fire marshals, fire code officials, and fire prevention professionals from jurisdictions across Oregon, including cities, counties, and fire districts. Our members administer and enforce the Oregon Fire Code and applicable fire and life safety provisions of the state building code, regulate hazardous materials, and lead community risk reduction efforts. OFMA's mission is to support consistent, technically sound fire and life safety standards that protect the public, emergency responders, and the built environment.

Post-wildfire and conflagration evaluations provide clear evidence that using fire-hardened building materials helps reduce ignition and slows fire spread between structures. One of the key challenges of wind driven fires is embers igniting spot fires. This can create a domino effect where new spot fires create additional embers that ignite additional fires. These scenarios can quickly overwhelm the firefighters that initially respond to fires.

Hardening helps slow fire ignitions and fire spread and buys valuable time for firefighters to control fires before they grow beyond the initial response capabilities. Property owners must have the ability to replace combustible materials with fire-hardened building

materials. This includes the ability to change combustible materials that connect buildings, such as fences, to non-combustible materials to help slow fire spread.

OFMA supports the ability to establish community standards for appearance and livability. We are providing our professional opinion to encourage HOA's and communities to work together to strengthen the positive impacts of wildfire mitigation practices. We support this bill, and the ability of Oregonians to create resilience and preserve their sense of home and community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Ratcliff – OFMA President
On behalf of the OFMA Board of Directors and Membership