



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Forestry

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September 2, 2008



The Honorable Peter Courtney, Co-Chair
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Co-Chair
State Legislative Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

RE: Request for Funding of Oregon Department of Forestry Incident Management Team Deployment to Sherman County Wildfires – July 2008

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) respectfully requests permission to appear before the September 25, 2008 Legislative Emergency Board for the purpose of requesting \$53,490 General Purpose Emergency Funds. The funds are needed to pay the costs of deploying an Incident Management Team to assist Sherman County during a period of multiple wildfire outbreaks in July 2008 (see attachment A).

Agency Action

During June 30 through July 2, 2008, Oregon received thousands of lightning strikes across the state. Sherman County, particularly hard hit with many fire starts, became overwhelmed as several of the fires originating in rangelands within canyons burned out of the canyons into agricultural lands. Because multiple structures were not threatened, and where the fires were burning were not accessible for structural firefighting equipment, State of Oregon Conflagration Act requirements did not apply. As authorized by the Governor, the Department responded to a request from Sherman County officials for assistance to help manage multiple wildfires within the County.

At the height of the event, wildfires were burning in excess of 40,000 to 50,000 acres across the county. Through deployment of an ODF Incident Management Team (IMT), the Department was able to assist the county with assessment of the wildfires and help provide coordination between county and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) suppression resources. With the assistance of the Team, county managers and the BLM were able to rapidly contain the fires, providing public safety and resource protection. The Team's deployment lasted two days, July 4 and 5.



Because the lands of Sherman County are not forested, and therefore, not within a Department forest protection district, the Department does not receive regular fire patrol funding to pay for these costs. Because the Department's fire fighting resources were not heavily engaged across the state, the Department was able to deploy a management team to provide assistance to help the county quickly gain control of the wildfires. Additionally, it is important to note that these fires were occurring at the same time the State of California was experiencing massive wildfires exhausting national and regional shared resources. Through successful action by the state to provide the county quick assistance the situation was mitigated quickly.


Action Requested

The Oregon Department of Forestry requests that the Legislative Emergency Board appropriate \$53,490 from General Purpose Emergency Funds to pay for the costs of assisting Sherman County with wildfire suppression.

Legislation Affected

Section 1, Paragraph 2, Chapter 754, Oregon Laws 2007 (General fund – Fire Protection)

Sincerely,


Marvin D. Brown
State Forester

- c: Mike Carrier, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Director
- Paul Evans, Governor's Policy Advisor, Emergency Preparedness, Military and Veterans' Affairs
- Oregon Board of Forestry
- ODF Executive Team
- Satish Upadhyay, Budget and Management Division
- Susan Jordan, Legislative Fiscal Office
- Travis Medema, Deputy Chief, Fire Protection Division
- Mark Hubbard, ODF Business Services Director

Attachment A

**Oregon Department of Forestry
Incident Management Team Deployment to
Sherman County
9-02-08**

ODF Personnel	\$ 22,500
Equipment and Supplies Plus Daily Cost	<u>\$ 30,990</u>
Total ODF General Purpose Emergency Funds Request	\$ 53,490