



**Approved**

## **Wildfire Programs Advisory Council – Meeting**

Friday, April 8, 2022

0900 – 1600

The complete Wildfire Programs Advisory Council can be viewed at the following website and serves as the official public meeting record: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/Pages/wildfire-programs-advisory-council.aspx>

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0900

**Welcome**

Chair Bennett

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Chair Bennett welcomed the council to the meeting and stated that the council was now transitioning to the foundation of the report phase of its work. He talked about the staffing problems that were challenging engine crews in the Vale Fire District and how these challenges could extend to statewide staffing before the start of the next fiscal year. These staffing issues could combine with drought conditions to create additional challenges at the beginning of the fire season.

Director Grafe commented that these hiring challenges are being felt all over and it is creating competition between fire districts for firefighters.

Senator Golden thanked the council members for their work and commitment on behalf of the legislature. He shared his concern about the upcoming fire season.

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0910

**House Keeping**

Vice-chair Browning

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Vice-chair Browning took the roll and reviewed meeting etiquette. He asked for approval of the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting summary and the committee members did not have any concerns.

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0920

**Director Update**

Director Grafe

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Director Grafe provided a high-level review of the March director's report: the report would come out every two months, there would now be an executive summary, future reports would transition towards planning and strategic thought, and positioning the state moving forward.

Director Grafe gave an overview of the impacts of the February legislative session on the council's work including some fine tuning of the language from SB 762, adding inclusiveness with tribes, interacting with media during incident response, and wildfire investments in the omnibus budget bill.

At the council's previous meeting the council requested a summary of the impacts on Oregon wildfire programs by the federal Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act. Director Grafe created a summary document that highlights sections of the bill that could potentially provide aid and stated

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that the Governor had established a task force to look at opportunities for aid. Director Grafe gave a high-level overview of the document. Several members of the council had questions about aid from the act in specific circumstances including cities purchasing fire trucks, aid for rural Oregonians with thinning, and individual assistance for power outage recovery. Director Grafe addressed if the act potentially includes aid in these scenarios.

Director Grafe gave an update on the SB 762 equity and vulnerable population case study. In addition to working with environmental justice representative on the council Alessandra de la Torre, this work is being done in conjunction with several agencies that also have equity directives in their SB 762 directives. The report out on the case study will happen in the Director’s monthly report as an appendix. Director Grafe gave an overview of the approach to the report and how the equity lens was being applied.

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1010                    **October Council Report Framework**                    All – Chair Bennett – EJ Davis

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Chair Bennett introduces EJ Davis from Oregon State University who will be taking the lead on writing the council report Susan Millhauser of DLCS would be assisting. EJ Davis provided an outline of the anticipated [October Report](#) and walked the council through the outline. The report is an opportunity to articulate the diverse perspectives that sit on the council. The report should be technically sounds and informative, the target audience is government and the legislature, but it should be able to communicate effectively with someone that has never read SB 762. Davis walked the council through the outline touching on each section. She stated that the report would have a strong executive summary and conclusion so that someone that is skimming the report would still be able to glean the major points.

Carol Whipple asked about the status of the wildfire risk map and Director Grafe responded that the map was due at the end of June and gave an update on ODF’s rulemaking process for implementing the requirements of SB 762.

Amelia Porterfield asked about the focus of this first report, how it will balance looking back vs to the future. The chair and Director Grafe stated that the report would look both at the recent past and the future.

Chair Bennett started the discussion about council work group formation and how to assign council members to the various workgroups. He stated that they would start with volunteering and see if that sufficiently populated the groups. The three work groups would be: alignment and editorial oversight, Wildland Urban Interface, and Land Use, and advancing fire protection. Chair Bennett stated that the subject matter of each group is not necessarily exclusive to that group and that it is anticipated that communication lines between groups would need to be active. The council discussed the leadership roles of chair and vice chair for each work group and what the responsibilities of those roles entail. The council discussed deadlines for group formation and meetings.

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1200                    **Lunch**

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1300                    **Public Comment**                    All

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The meeting was opened for public comment and no public comment was received. Future requests for public comment can be sent to [Jacque.Carlisle@oregon.gov](mailto:Jacque.Carlisle@oregon.gov).

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**Higher Education Coordinating Commission**

Doug Denning from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) gave a report to the council on the commission's implementation of the SB 762 and the Oregon Conservation Corps. Denning gave an overview of the HECC's vision for the program and the coordination that would happen between the HECC and the Department of Forestry. He gave an overview of the grant making process so far and the next steps and challenges moving forward.

**Oregon State University and Oregon Department of Forestry**

Derek Gasperini from ODF gave a review of progress since the last report. He talked about the rulemaking advisory committee process and the next steps in the rulemaking. There was some concern from the council about the map not being available for comment prior to the public hearings on the new rules. The council expressed interest in keeping up to date on new developments with SB 762 implementation across agencies and the best way to do that. Chair Bennett mentioned possibly reaching out to agency public information officers for assistance.

**Oregon State Fire Marshal**

Travis Medema updated the council on OSFM's work on defensible space standards and community risk reduction standards. He gave an overview on new programs: Fire Adapted Oregon and Response Ready Oregon. He updated the council on where OSFM is with developing defensible space standards and some of the challenges and next steps for that effort. He gave an update on OSFM's preparations for the upcoming fire season. He stated that the grant programs that he mentioned, and the defensible space programs will ramp up after the WUI risk mapping is complete. He shared some of the takeaways from recent public listening sessions that OSFM had conducted. A request was made to the Council to address: SB 762 Sec 36 (2) (f) at the next council meeting to help guide OSFM's work towards building Oregon's defensible space code.

**Department of Consumer and Business Services – Building Codes Division**

Alana Cox presented to the council on the division's implementation of SB 762. She gave an overview of the background of optional fire hardening measures available in the building code and the plan to amend those sections to make them mandatory in high and extreme wildfire risk zone. The rules will be adopted by October 1, 2022, and mandatory on April 1, 2023. Building Codes is working with the state fire marshal to coordinate on outreach and public education. She also talked about a grant program that the division is administering that will utilize some of the same fire hardening measures that are included in the optional sections of the building code.

**Department of Land Conservation and Development**

Susan Millhauser talked about the kickoff of DLCD's community engagement on land use recommendations. The process will run through the end of August and will ideally involve input from a large and diverse group of stakeholders. She went over with DLCD's implementation responsibility under SB 762 including recommendations for statewide land use planning, local comprehensive plans, and zoning codes. These recommendations take into account state and local resources and regional differences. These recommendations could span a wide range of wildfire safety measures. She detailed the focus that DLCD was using to guide the recommendation development process including protection of current assets, planning for growth, and integrating the statewide risk map.

Chair Bennett stated that the next meeting intends to include agency updates from Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Human Services, and Oregon Health Authority. He also allowed for another update from DLCD.

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1600

**Wrap Up**

Chair Bennett

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Chair Bennett and the council advised that the next meeting of the council would be in person and in Salem. The Council may decide to meet sooner than July after the workgroups meet.