

OREGON OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

SENATE BILL 762 BIANNUAL REPORT



FEBRUARY // 2022



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 762, which relates to wildfire, in June of 2021. The law codified wildfire prevention, risk reduction, and emergency response programs for the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM). This initial report, endorsed by the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council, provides status and financial updates for the following OSFM responsibilities as required by the Senate Bill 762, Section 10(2)(a)–(d):

- **The status regarding community risk reduction and the establishment, administration, and enforcement of defensible space requirements.**
 - Designed the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Unit with nine staff members. The majority of the positions are hired, with the remainder in recruitment.
 - CRR Unit has engaged in 284 meetings or planning activities in 32 counties with fire agencies, local governments, and stakeholder groups.
 - Developed stakeholder workshops to inform the strategic investments of CRR and Emergency Response funding to begin in March 2022.
 - Engaged with partner agencies and stakeholders to generate a Defensible Space Code adoption timeline and meeting framework. As a result, the code adoption process is on track to meet the legislative deadline of December 31, 2022.
 - Recruiting in progress procurement and grant management staff to support the distribution of monies in the CRR Fund.
- **The amount of moneys expended during the year for community risk reduction and the establishment, administration, or enforcement of defensible space requirements.**
 - Expended funding on CRR projects and educational events. The office anticipates investments in CRR in the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2022.
 - Finalizing a \$149,500 contract for a training course to be offered to local fire agencies and others on assessing and mitigating wildfire risk to structures.
- **The amount of moneys expended during the year for the suppression of fires on wildland-urban interface lands.**
 - With the nine (9) declared Emergency Conflagrations, fire season 2021 totaled \$21.5 million. These large fire costs are funded by state funds and federal FEMA grant funds.
 - Total expended from Senate Bill 762 funds on wildfire suppression tools, including prepositioning and immediate response, was \$3.19 million on Fire Season 2021.
- **Any recommendations of the State Fire Marshal for legislative action, including, but not limited to, current or future resource and funding needs for community risk reduction and establishing, administering, or enforcing defensible space requirements.**
 - OSFM respectfully recommends that the CRR Fund and Emergency Response appropriations be sustained across multiple biennia to ensure OSFM can develop durable programs to bolster response and CRR educational efforts to protect Oregon and communities from the devastating impacts of wildfire.

This report reflects the investments made by the OSFM in response and risk reduction since July 1, 2021. Much of the foundational framework needed to establish programs is complete so that in the future, OSFM can transition seamlessly into the implementation phase of strategically investing in reducing risk and bolstering wildfire response.

A full electronic report can be found here: [762 Reports](#)

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION AND **WILDFIRE RESPONSE**

The Community Risk Reduction Unit includes nine staff: a CRR Manager, Program Coordinator, and seven regional Fire Risk Reduction Specialists (FRRS's). Since July, FRRS's have engaged with fire chiefs, fire defense boards, fire prevention cooperatives, and other stakeholder groups. In addition, the CRR Unit is finalizing a contract with a vendor to provide 13 courses that provide key knowledge and skills in assessing and mitigating wildfire risk to structures. The Unit also provided funds for defensible space work during the 2021 Bootleg Fire in Lake County, a community preparedness event in Klamath County, and repairs to the Oregon Garden Fire Safety House in Marion County.

Senate Bill 762 directed OSFM to adopt a statewide minimum Defensible Space Code on lands that meet the definition of the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and to establish rules pertaining to the enforcement of the Code in "High" and "Extreme" wildfire risk areas. The code adoption process is on track to meet the legislative deadline of December 2022. The first Oregon Defensible Space Code workgroup meeting will be held in February 2022. Concurrently, OSFM is engaged with the Rule Advisory Committee (RAC), facilitated by the Oregon Department of Forestry, which is developing the definition of the WUI, establishing the criteria associated with the WUI definition, and developing a comprehensive statewide map that identifies the wildland-urban interface and risk levels. Upon completion of this work, OSFM will finalize the development of the Defensible Space Code.

In 2021, because of the funds provided in Senate Bill 762, OSFM had new wildfire response tools at its disposal to keep wildfires small and away from communities. For the first time, OSFM could mobilize resources outside of a formal conflagration declaration through "prepositioning" (placing firefighting equipment and personnel in high-risk areas for brief periods of high fire danger) and "immediate response" (sending equipment and personnel to growing wildfires). By strategically using these response tools in times of elevated fire risk due to weather, local resource drawdown, and expected ignition risk, resources were able to stop fires while they were small and prevent costly conflagrations.

Senate Bill 762 also provided additional staff to assist with mobilizations. Regional Mobilization Coordinators are now in place throughout Oregon to collaborate with fire defense board chiefs and local fire chiefs to develop, administer, and maintain strategies and plans to improve the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System. Finally, Senate Bill 762 provided monies to bolster and modernize Oregon's response capacity through a new Engine Program. This program will purchase firefighting equipment to be strategically stationed throughout Oregon to further protect communities with shorter response times and high-quality, fully-equipped apparatus. A committee is currently developing the specifications for the engines, and data analysis is underway to determine the best placement for this new equipment.



OSFM TIMELINE

SB 762
IMPLEMENTATION**MAY 2021**

Initiatives created with LD staff with Emergency Board funding.

JULY 2021

\$4.3 million in Wildland-Urban Interface grants awarded.

OCTOBER 2021

Gap analysis for OSFM Engine Program conducted.

DECEMBER 2021

Engine Program Specification Committee formed. First meeting held.

FEBRUARY 2022

Defensible space code stakeholder kickoff meeting.

APRIL 2022

Engine Program vendor selection

JULY 2022

Prepositioning & Immediate Response mobilizations.

DECEMBER 2022

Defensible space code adoption.

FEBRUARY 2021

WUI Grants open with Emergency Board funding.

JULY 2021

1st Preposition & Immediate Response Assignments.

JULY 2021

Senate Bill 762 signed into law.

NOVEMBER 2021

OSFM & partners host Klamath County Plan & Prepare Fair at the Klamath County Fair Grounds.

FEBRUARY 2022

1st OSFM bi-annual progress report on SB 762 presented to the legislature.

MARCH 2022

OSFM Listening Tours

APRIL 2022

NFPA Assessing Structure Ignition Potential classes begin statewide.

AUGUST 2022

OSFM bi-annual progress report on Senate Bill 762 due to the legislature.

IMPLEMENTATION
TIMELINES

Through the development of programs, OSFM is considering all factors contributing to a community's ability to connect with resources, such as socioeconomic differences, the language spoken at home, rural Oregon, ethnicity, and size and capacity of the local fire service agency. OSFM will utilize regional Fire Risk Reduction Specialists to develop localized risk reduction and suppression solutions through grant projects, providing additional suppression resources, and planning community pilot projects.

To best meet the needs of Oregonians, the Oregon fire service, and stakeholders through Senate Bill 762, OSFM has created two initiatives.

Fire Adapted Oregon is designed to prepare communities for wildfire through local community projects and investments in community action. The initiative is grounded in statewide data, science, and new defensible space codes.



Response Ready Oregon aims to bolster firefighting response capacity, modernize the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System (OFMAS), and support partnerships between fire agencies to keep fires small and out of communities.



OSFM recognizes the responsibility that the office has been given through legislation. The staff has been putting the critical pieces in place since the legislation has been passed to ensure that the office could prioritize programs with extended timeframes, such as the Engine Program and a new defensible space code based on ongoing rulemaking by other agencies. OSFM is on track to meet the legislative deadlines outlined in Senate Bill 762 and is engaged in choreographed partnerships to ensure success.



This report was prepared by:

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

www.oregon.gov/osp/sfm

Endorsed by:

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