



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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### **House Passes Bill to Fund Nearly \$200 Million in Wildfire Response, Recovery and Mitigation**

*SB 762 would coordinate a statewide response to plan for and mitigate wildfires with a focus on community preparedness and public health*

SALEM, OR --Today the House voted to invest \$188 million in wildfire response and recovery efforts. [SB 762](#) would coordinate a comprehensive statewide response to plan for and mitigate wildfires with a focus on community preparedness and public health. The bill also forms a local Wildfire Programs Advisory Council to monitor and provide input on investments and planning.

“SB 762 gives state agencies and local communities the funding they need to effectively and safely prevent and respond to wildfire,” said [Rep. Pam Marsh](#) (D-Southern Jackson County). “After two years of public input and testimony, we are finally funding a comprehensive program to help keep Oregonians safe. On the cusp of another devastating wildfire season, SB 762 cannot wait.”

The legislation comes in response to the state’s increasingly severe wildfires that since 2020 have destroyed over 4,000 homes and incinerated millions of acres of land.

“After this week, I will hang up my legislative blazer and don my firefighter gear. Nearly every firefighter in this state will be touched by this coming fire season, as evidenced by this week’s record heat, low humidity, and numerous fires already burning,” said [Rep. Dacia Grayber](#) (D-Tigard), who was on the frontlines during last year’s wildfires. “Our firefighters have the tenacity and determination to continue this heroic fight, but this state lacks a comprehensive policy approach that aligns statewide responses with the communities and folks like me on the ground. We need SB 762. Without this bill, it will be our frontline workers, low-income families, and small businesses who will bear the brunt of the burden. People’s lives and well-being depend on this.”

Since 2017 the state has spent over \$1.4 billion in fighting fires. SB 762 will drive down costs through a coordinated response and targeted investments in:

**Wildfire Response & Capacity:** Funds firefighter and frontline worker capacity; coordinates fire mitigation planning and response between state agencies, the State Fire Marshal and Department of Forestry, with local governments and communities; invests in filtration, electric, and clean air systems to alleviate the harmful impacts of smoke on public health.

- **Planning & Preparedness:** Coordinates State Fire Marshal, Department of Forestry and emergency response with local governments; identifies prescribed fire and protected areas, in addition to a statewide map of wildfire risk; implements wildfire smoke detection cameras to ensure rapid response; and creates a youth corps program with training to help prepare local communities.
- **Infrastructure:** Updates building codes and establishes safety standards, including the defensible space standard, to create buffers around properties and land in high risk areas and fire-harden structures. This is essential infrastructure that will help firefighters do their jobs by containing and lessening the fire's impacts.
- **Transparency in Public Processes & Rulemaking:** Forms a local Wildfire Programs Advisory Council to monitor and provide input on investments and planning. This also ensures consultation with state agencies, existing boards and commissions, and community members.

“This is a framework upon which we can build sustainable resiliency: mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery strategies and capacities,” said [Rep. Paul Evans](#) (D- Monmouth). “These reforms are reflective of our needs right now. Climate change is the fight of our lifetimes.”

SB 762 invests in forest health and restoration to reduce wildfire severity and the impacts of smoke and debris on public health and safety.

“Our communities are at extreme risk as we speak. This fire season has already begun and the time for debate is over, we must take action,” said [Rep. Paul Holvey](#) (D-Eugene). SB 762 is a comprehensive statewide approach which has been years in the making that will prepare us to address devastating wildfires and protect our most vulnerable communities.”

The bill passed 49-6 and now heads to the Senate.

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