



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Agenda Item Summary

Agenda Category: RESOLUTION

Item No:

Date: 06/25/2019

RE2019-015

Originating Department: BOCC

Issue: In the matter of a Resolution proclaiming the position of the Klamath County Board of Commissioners related to the prevention and suppression of wildfires in Klamath County.

Background: Read the attached Resolution.

Fiscal Impact: None.

Recommended Motion: Motion to sign the attached Resolution.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KLAMATH COUNTY, OREGON**

IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING)	RESOLUTION NO. <u>RE2019-015</u>
THE POSITION OF THE KLAMATH)	
COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS)	
RELATED TO THE PREVENTION AND)	
SUPPRESSION OF WILDFIRES IN)	
<u>KLAMATH COUNTY</u>)	

WHEREAS, the people of Klamath County, Oregon, have suffered and continue to suffer from wildfires and related smoke occurring on lands within and around Klamath County;

WHEREAS, and wildfires pose significant threats to the livability of Klamath County; and

WHEREAS, the threats to real and personal property posed by wildfires and related smoke include damage and destruction of people's homes and businesses located in areas that are directly threatened by burning wildfires and related smoke; and

WHEREAS, threats to the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Klamath County include threats from the flames of the wildfires and the smoke and other byproducts of the wildfires which impact people and the environment throughout the County; and

WHEREAS, the threats to the economic viability of Klamath County include not only the loss of timber and other resources destroyed by wildfires, but also recreational entertainment and other activities which are affected negatively or cancelled throughout Klamath County due to smoke and other byproducts of wildfires; and

WHEREAS, the threats to the livelihoods of the people of Klamath County include lost economic opportunities and jobs impacted by wildfires and related smoke from wildfires, and the loss of desirability of Klamath County as a place to live, work, and recreate because of the constant threat and presence of unsuppressed and out of control wildfires and related smoke impacting our community; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government, through its Federal agencies, owns and manages most of the land within Klamath County making these Federal agencies, by far, the owners of the largest portion of land within Klamath County; and

WHEREAS, being the largest land owner in Klamath County, the United States Government has the greatest impact on how public lands within the County are managed, through its Federal agencies' polices, to prevent and lessen the intensity of wildfires and related smoke and by how wildfires occurring in and impacting the County are fought; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners additionally met with numerous representatives of Federal and State agencies and private entities to learn the causes of, and solutions to, the out of control wildfires occurring in and impacting our community; and

WHEREAS, representatives of Federal agencies indicated that their agencies have adopted policies which permitted agency representatives the discretion to allow wildfires occurring on lands managed by those agencies to continue to burn regardless of the impacts of those wildfires and related smoke on the community; and

WHEREAS, representatives of Federal agencies indicated that those agencies also lacked the resources necessary to fully suppress all wildfires occurring on lands managed by those agencies and that those limited resources were deployed on the regional or national needs assessments leaving more rural communities like Klamath County at significant risk for not having sufficient resources to fight wildfires occurring in and impacting our community; and

WHEREAS, representative of the State agency indicated that State law and policy required those agencies to work fully to suppress any wildfires occurring on lands managed by those agencies; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the State agency indicated that they, similar to the Federal agencies, lacked sufficient resources necessary to fully suppress all wildfires occurring on lands managed by those agencies and that more resources would permit those agencies to more fully work towards suppressing wildfires on such lands.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management should adopt policies and practices providing for the full suppression, in an expedited manner, of wildfires and related smoke occurring on lands managed by those respective agencies in a state during the official wildfire season declared by that state.

The United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management should adopt policies and practices providing for the reduction of fuels and the creation and maintenance of fuel breaks on all lands managed by those respective agencies, including harvesting of timber, development and maintenance of roads, mechanical fuels reduction, prescriptive burns outside of declared wildfire seasons, and other proven methods for reducing the amount and intensity of wildfires and related smoke occurring on those lands.

Congress should annually appropriate sufficient funding for the United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management to fully implement the aforementioned policies and practices of fully suppressing, in an expedited manner, wildfire and related smoke, reducing fuels, and creating and maintaining fuel breaks, including access roads, on all lands managed by those respective agencies.

The Oregon Department of Forestry's policy of full suppression of wildfires on lands managed by that agency during wildfire season is appropriate and fully supported by the Klamath County Board of Commissioners.

The Oregon legislature should annually appropriate enough funding for the Oregon Department of Forestry to fully implement the policy and practice of full suppression of wildfires and related smoke occurring on lands managed by the Department of Forestry during the official wildfire season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Klamath County Board of Commissioners will continue to make efforts to influence and coordinate with Federal and State agencies and governments to appropriately manage lands under their respective control for the prevention of and lessening the intensity of, wildfires and related smoke; and to fully suppress, in an expedited manner, wildfires that occur on those lands during wildfire season.

DONE AND DATED this 25th day of June, 2019

KLAMATH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair

Vice-Chair

Commissioner