

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

STATE OF OREGON, COUNTY OF JACKSON

IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING THE)
POSITION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY)
COMMISSIONERS FOR JACKSON COUNTY,)
OREGON, RELATED TO THE PREVENTION)
AND SUPPRESSION OF WILDFIRES IN)
JACKSON COUNTY)

ORDER NO. 17-19

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

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners held a series of public meetings and a public hearing to gather input from the People of Jackson County as to the impacts that the wildfires and smoke and other by-products of those fires have had on the People's health, safety, and welfare, and to receive People's opinions on what efforts should be made to prevent and reduce the intensity of wildfires and related smoke; and

WHEREAS, the People of Jackson County identified that these wildfires pose significant threats to their real and personal property, health, safety, welfare, economic opportunities, and the very livability of Jackson County; and

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

WHEREAS, the threats to the health, safety, and welfare of the People of Jackson County include both the threat from the flames of the wildfires but, more so, the smoke and other by-products of the wildfires which impact People and the environment regardless of where they live in Jackson County; and

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

WHEREAS, the threats to the livelihoods of the People of Jackson County include lost economic opportunities and jobs impacted by the wildfires and related smoke from the wildfires, and the loss of the desirability of Jackson 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 People of Jackson County identified numerous actions which all landowners, including Federal and State agencies, in and around Jackson County could take to lessen the threats of and intensity of wildfires including reducing fuels on lands susceptible to wildfires through prescribed burns and mechanical means, harvesting timber to reduce fuel loads, stewardship of the lands, and developing and maintaining roads for access to fight wildfires and as fuel breaks to lessen the spread of wildfires; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government, through its Federal agencies, owns and manages 53.09 percent of all land within Jackson County making these Federal agencies, by far, the owners of the largest portion of land within Jackson County; and

WHEREAS, being the largest landowner in Jackson County, the United States Government has the greatest impact on how public lands within the County are managed, through its Federal agencies' policies, 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 based on the regional or national needs assessments, leaving more rural communities like Jackson County at significant risk for not having sufficient resources to fight wildfires occurring in and impacting our community; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the State agency indicated that State law and policy required those agencies to work to fully 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,

The Board of County Commissioners of Jackson County PROCLAIMS that:

1. The United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management should adopt policies and practices providing for the full suppression 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.
2. 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.

3. 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 wildfire and related smoke, reducing fuels, and creating and maintaining fuel breaks, including access roads, on all lands managed by those respective agencies.

4. 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 Jackson County Board of County Commissioners.

5. 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.

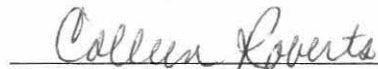
6. The Board of County Commissioners and Jackson County shall continue to take efforts to influence and coordinate with Federal and State agencies and governments to appropriately manage lands under their respective control for the prevention of, and lessening the intensity of, wildfires and related smoke, and to fully suppress wildfires on those lands which occur during the official State-declared wildfire season.

DATED this 30th day of January, 2019, at Medford, Oregon.

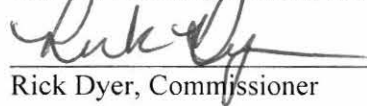
JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Bob Strosser, Chair



Colleen Roberts, Commissioner



Rick Dyer, Commissioner