

September 14, 2022

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

I appreciate the Department of Interior's August 2nd response to my inquiry on this year's wildfire season and the progress your crews have made to combat fires this season. However, increased fire risk in Oregon this month indicates that more information is required to ensure Oregonians remain safe and prepared. Oregonians want detailed plans on how the Department will use the recent increases in funding for wildfire prevention and to further address wildland firefighter staffing shortages. Please respond to the following questions by Monday, October 3, 2022:

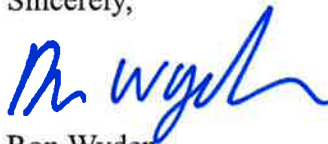
- How many of the Department's 7.1 million acres of "very high" or "high likelihood of exposure to wildfire" are within Oregon? While it is excellent to see \$30 million in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding heading to Oregon to address 150,000 acres of hazardous fuels over the next two years, what are the plans to address the remaining very high or high wildfire risk acreage within the state? Is the plan to tackle 150,000 acres in Oregon every two years or is there a different plan?
- The State of Oregon has been working on statewide wildfire risk maps. How are you incorporating that data into prioritizing hazardous fuels treatments across the state? Have you been coordinating with the State, industry, or other private landowners to maximize fuels treatments across jurisdictional boundaries?
- I would like more information regarding how the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Oregon is increasing prevention efforts with the regional prevention team concept and the ongoing work with the University of Oregon's ALERTWildfire program and the coordination with Oregon State University that helps with detection and to verify real-time fire ignition, fire behavior, and weather information.
- As Oregon is seeing more common late summer wind events and red flag outlooks as a result of climate change, initial attack crews are starting to be hard to find as seasonal crews in the southwest are slated to end. As of this date, there are eight hotshot crews in the Southwest region that are listed as unavailable due to being "out of season," meaning their time-limited positions have expired. These crews would be of huge benefit as Oregon continues to battle potentially catastrophic fires. How are you planning on

addressing these essential crew shortages while the region sees these on-the-ground changes?

- I am glad to hear the Department is developing a broader firefighting workforce strategy to guide the composition and transformation of the workforce over the next several decades. I look forward to hearing more about the details of the strategy. If there are any legislative solutions that would ease this transition please provide me with that information.

I greatly appreciate the continued dedicated efforts of the land management agencies your Department oversees to contain and respond to increasingly devastating wildfires. I stand ready to support wildfire prevention, response, and recovery for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator