



## Board of County Commissioners

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February 1, 2016

The Honorable Chris Edwards, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
900 Court St. NE, S-411  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Senator Edwards:

The Deschutes County Board of Commissioners respectfully urges you to schedule a hearing on SB 1520 in the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources at your earliest convenience.

As you likely know, most of the land mass within Deschutes County is publicly owned and managed and much of it is officially classified as forestland. You may also be aware that Deschutes County, in close collaboration with state and federal government agencies, has been very aggressive in its efforts to mitigate the risks of wildfire danger in the forestland-urban interface and in managing our natural resources to protect important assets such as water quality, rangelands, habitat, recreational opportunities, and private and public property.

The provisions outlined in SB 1520 offer valuable tools to continue this work. Good Neighbor Agreements are already being used in many states to increase resources available to manage and improve forests and watersheds. Tax credits for reforestation will provide assistance to landowners facing extensive reforestation costs following catastrophic wildfires, which are common events in our region. And, as in previous legislative sessions, we are greatly supportive of any effort that encourages the use of woody biomass as a fuel source. Within Deschutes County, chipping is a necessary part of wildfire fuel reduction activities that take place on private, county, state, and federal lands. Consequently, a steady supply of rough, clean, wood chips is readily available. Developing a market for this resource would help to both create jobs and eliminate wasteful by-products.

SB 1520 offers these and other benefits that will help all of us to better protect life and property, manage natural resources, and preserve habitat. Again, we strongly encourage you to allow this bill to move forward.

Sincerely,

DESCHUTES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Alan Unger  
Chair

Tammy Baney  
Vice Chair

Anthony DeBone  
Commissioner

c: Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
Senators Ted Ferrioli, Tim Knopp, and Doug Whitsett  
Representatives Knute Buehler, John Huffman, Mike McLane, and Gene Whisnant