



# JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

## Board of Commissioners

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## PUBLIC LANDS RESOLUTION

### Proposed Resolution Regarding Wildland Fire Regulations and Policies

**Issue:** Federal agencies, including the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), have adopted regulations, policies, and guidelines that allow lightning-caused fires to burn on Federal lands at all times and that permit the use of prescribed fires, regardless of ignition source, on Federal lands at all times. (See, e.g., Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy & Program Review, December 18, 1995 and Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, February 13, 2009).

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports greater coordination between federal land management agencies and local governments in implementing wildland fire suppression policies and strategies, with the understanding that a blanket, one-size-fits-all policy is untenable on diverse landscapes. Federal agencies must work with local governments to accomplish their land management goals, including wildfire suppression and risk reduction, and ensure such efforts do not jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of local residents.

**Background:** The Federal Government owns significant percentages of the land in the Western States. In Nevada, 84.9 percent of the State is in Federal ownership; Utah, 64.9 percent; Idaho, 61.6 percent; Alaska, 61.2 percent; Oregon, 52.9 percent; Wyoming, 48.1 percent; California, 45.8 percent; Arizona, 38.6 percent; Colorado, 35.9 percent; New Mexico, 34.7 percent; Montana, 29.0 percent; and Washington, 28.5 percent. The Western States have suffered historic wildfires over the past several years, a significant portion for which the source of ignition is on Federal lands. These wildfires, the related smoke, and other impacts have a dramatic impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of these states.

USFS and BLM policies and guidelines allowing these wildfires to burn and to authorize the management ignition of additional wildfires during a declared wildfire season have significant negative impacts on the residents of these States. Residents' real and personal property and health are put at an enhanced risk when wildfires are allowed to burn and prescribed fires are allowed to be ignited during a State-declared wildfire season. While prescribed burns are useful management tools for Federal agencies, such burns should not be permitted when residents' health, safety, and welfare are already at jeopardy due to wildfire season conditions.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Counties should not see any additional fiscal impacts. This Resolution does not seek to require additional resources be appropriated for Federal agency actions. The urban and rural citizens' health, safety, and welfare would be enhanced by directing Federal agencies to focus on extinguishing fires during the enhanced risks associated with a State-declared fire season.

**Sponsor:** Colleen Roberts, Commissioner, Jackson County, Oregon.