



HILARY S. FRANZ  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

SB 5611 | HB 1578

\$12.8M

Funding for improving community preparedness, recovery, and resilience of wildland fire health and safety impacts in the wildland-urban interface and in areas of increasing population density



#### CONTACT

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# Cascading Impacts of Wildfire: Multi-Hazard Health and Safety Risks in Fast-Growing Regions

**The frequency and severity of wildfires, associated smoke incursions, and post-fire landslides within the Wildland-Urban Interface and in areas of growing population density are expected to intensify in the years to come, fueled by drought, forest insects and disease, and rising temperatures.**



**This includes many areas of Western Washington that have not characteristically faced such present and growing threats.**

Wildland fires create an immediate safety threat to lives and lands, but also pose cascading and multi-hazard risks during *and* following fire events, such as air, land, and water quality degradation and destabilization. The smoke that enveloped many areas of Western Washington during the 2022 fire season is a reminder of the importance of smoke preparedness to mitigate exposure. Higher-intensity fires followed by even modest rainstorms can instigate post-fire flash floods and debris flow that threaten to cause destruction for years after a fire. The rise of development and residence within the high-risk Wildland-Urban Interface means more people and infrastructure may be vulnerable to landslides. Increased recreation on public lands creates an even greater emergent need for strategic disaster and evacuation planning and response. Soil erosion and runoff lead to sediment flow and flooding that can threaten human health and damage homes, wildlife, and public infrastructure.

## A Holistic Approach to Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

### Air Quality – Smoke Monitoring and Predictive Services Team



- Establish a smoke monitoring and predictive services team to assess wildland fire smoke risks and impacts. Expanding upon existing cross-agency emergency management planning and response team efforts, DNR plans to deploy air quality monitoring equipment, conduct simulation modeling, and provide real-time data and smoke exposure forecasts to support community-level public health efforts.



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## Expanding “Wildfire Ready Neighbors”

- Expand this successful program to high-risk regions on the Westside – building upon the 4,000 home and property assessments already completed across seven Eastside counties, for which 19,000 preparedness actions have been committed to.



## Integrating Smoke Readiness with Wildfire Readiness

- Defensible space and home hardening strategies championed in DNR’s individual-property and community-level assessments will be integrated with home weatherization resources from partner agencies to improve indoor air quality as well as the leveraging of cross-agency partnerships to promote additional community clean air centers.

## Burned Area Emergency Response and Stabilization Team

- Create a structure for state-level burned area emergency response and stabilization teams to support the implementation of hazard mitigation and post-fire treatments for public safety and resource protection. This will provide capacity-building to local communities to establish local teams coordinated by county emergency managers, local law enforcement, and fire protection districts.

## Post-Wildfire Debris Flow Program

- Launch a post-wildfire debris flow program to conduct landslide hazard data analysis and assessment, including conducting LiDAR-based alluvial fan mapping, burned-area assessments, and modeling to determine triggers for post-wildfire debris flow early warning for at-risk communities and infrastructure. This informs emergency managers, local governments, and the public where property and lives may be at risk of future debris flows and flash floods.

## Wildfire Risk Decadal Assessments

- Recognizing that climate change will continue to shift regional fire vulnerabilities, DNR will provide updated modeling to assess high-fire risk regions on a decadal basis, integrating the most updated meteorological and geological projections and assessments. Detailed data will provide property-owners, the public, Tribes, and local governments the ability to develop responsive strategies to address their specific wildfire risk profile.

## Evacuation Strategy Development and Partnership

- Coordinate with local law enforcement, county emergency managers, local fire protection districts, and Tribes to develop public safety evacuation strategies for areas identified in the respective decadal assessments. DNR will lead the implementation of emergency disaster and evacuation plan design and information dissemination on DNR-managed lands.