

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
STATE OF OREGON, COUNTY OF JACKSON

IN THE MATTER OF SUPPORTING THE FOREST
EMERGENCY RECOVERY & RESEARCH ACT (FERRA)) Order 576-05

WHEREAS, the number and severity of catastrophic events such as wildfire and windstorm causing severe resource damage on forest and rangelands has increased in recent decades, causing serious adverse environmental, social and economic consequences to both national and local interests; and

WHEREAS, catastrophic events devastate ecosystems, severely compromising their capacity to recover, delaying reestablishment of appropriate forest and plant cover, increasing the susceptibility of the lands to repeated wildfires and invasions of noxious plant species, increasing the frequency and severity of insect infestations and disease outbreaks on adjacent public and private lands, and causing increased erosion and degradation of riparian plant and wildlife habitats and water quality for human consumption; and

WHEREAS, authorities currently available to the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to respond to catastrophic events on lands under their jurisdictions do not provide for timely and effective response activities, with currently required review processes frequently resulting in delays beyond the window of opportunity available for effective recovery plan implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act (“FERRA”) would provide authority for timely and effective responses to catastrophic events, allowing the land management agencies to rapidly respond to the unique characteristics of each event and the particular needs of each locale, allowing for the use of damaged trees and other resources before they lose all economic value, while restoring ecosystems to a naturally functioning state; and

WHEREAS, expedited procedures under FERRA would be limited to catastrophic events over 1,000 acres, providing for prompt evaluation of damage and risk assessments for federal and adjacent non-federal lands, interdisciplinary scientific review, public notice and full participation in the development of recovery plans, and access to speedy appeals and litigation if there are disagreements; and

WHEREAS, increased scientific research on the means and methods for best recovering ecosystems damaged by catastrophic events is needed, and FERRA provides for such research, including monitoring of restoration projects, partnerships with colleges and universities, and increased emphasis on implementing the results of such research in the formulation of response plans; and

WHEREAS, FERRA provides for involvement of state, local and tribal authorities in evaluating damage from catastrophic events and formulating appropriate response plans, thereby insuring that the interests of local communities and adjacent landowners are heard and considered;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED that the Board of Commissioners of Jackson County supports prompt passage of the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, with its commitment to timely responses to catastrophic events on federal lands, allowing for rapid restoration of ecosystems, usage of damaged trees before they lose all economic value, protection of adjacent lands from subsequent wildfires, insect infestations and disease outbreaks, and full public notice and participation, including involvement by state, local and tribal authorities in recovery planning and implementation.

Dated this 30th day of November, 2005 at Medford, Oregon.


JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Jack Walker, Chair

Dave Gilmour, Commissioner

voted NO



Dennis C. W. Smith, Commissioner