



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

July 12, 2022

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Elsbeth Gustavson
Willamette National Forest All Units
3106 Pierce Parkway Suite D
Springfield, OR, 97477

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Danielle Bethell, Chair
Colm Willis
Kevin Cameron

RE: 2020 Fire-Affected Road System Risk Reduction Environmental Assessment (EA)
#61749

Dear Ms. Gustavson,

The Marion County Board of Commissioners strongly supports the efforts of the Forest Service to reduce the safety risks on the 2020 fire-affected road system. On September 7, 2020, the Beachie Creek and Lionshead Wildfires swept through the Santiam Canyon causing unprecedented damage in our community. Some of the fire's destruction has remained unrestored, creating dangers that must be addressed to allow safe access to these areas.

The Forest Supervisor should grant a finding of no significant impact for the 2020 Fire Affected Road System Risk Reduction proposal and implement fire-killed and injured tree felling activities. The EA thoroughly analyzes the environmental impacts of tree felling activities. The EA repeatedly highlights the risk of refusing or waiting to begin tree felling activities. Large amounts of dry fuels on the ground increases the chances the area could reburn. In addition, leaving danger trees could lead to roads being impassable and unsafe. The failure to maintain these routes could lead to road failure, harming both the community and the surrounding environment. It is imperative that felling trees happens as soon as possible.

The Board urges the Forest Service to see that priority be given to roads utilized for access to high use recreation areas and communication infrastructure, including Breitenbush, French Creek- 2223, 2231, McCoy Creek- 2233, 2207, and 2209. The needs and safety of the residents of the Santiam Canyon should be prioritized as the Forest Service determines next actions. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our community.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bethell, Chair

Colm Willis, Commissioner

Kevin Cameron, Commissioner

RTB