

To: Board Members
Dobbins/Oregon House Fire Protection District
P.O. Box 164, Oregon House CA 95962

From: Steering Committee
Community Wildfire Hardening,
Dobbins/Oregon House

January 26, 2025

Greetings to the Board of the Dobbins/Oregon House Fire Protection District!

Myself with my colleagues on the newly formed Steering Committee for Community Wildfire Hardening are writing to request a Letter of Support from the Board on a significant update to the 2014 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), originally developed for the Yuba County Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council in coordination with other agencies. We understand that there was a US Forest Service grant awarded to the Fire Safe Council in 2024 to [update the plan](#), and we believe that, as discussed below, our strategic approach could be a significant input to the plan's update.

Our interest in updating the 2014 plan is for the following reasons:

The hazardous wildfire conditions of the Dobbins/Oregon House area in the 2014 report have only worsened in the meantime, both because of new growth in vegetation and while, despite the Firesafe Council's efforts and well-laid out recommendations in the 2014 study, there have been no significant wildfire protection projects in the area. One key input into an updated CWPP would be check whether the Fire Districts have inspected their roads as being 'passable for emergency vehicles'. Egress routes for the community escaping wildfire and for inbound emergency vehicles is extremely limited. To quote from the 2014 report: 'most of the minor roads in the project area are currently unsafe for access or egress during a wildfire, and a fast-moving wildfire has the potential to kill people trapped in their cars'. A key factor in the Paradise fire was the lack of safe exits for the community. As the 2014 report states, 'More public fatalities occur during evacuation than from their structure burning down around them'.

It's not a question of 'if' a wildfire will occur in the Dobbins/Oregon House but 'when'. In the last 5 years, there have been at least 7 fires of more than 50 acres within a few miles of Oregon House: Willows Fire (2020), Rices, Frenchtown and Glen Fires (2021), Winding and Brandie Fires (2022), Scott Fire 2023 (and of course more fires of less than 50 acres). We believe that coordinating both residence hardening with strategic community hardening will bring a measure of security to the Dobbins/Oregon House community and win their support as well.

Our approach is to provide community support for the Firesafe Council's efforts with hardening homes and developing fire-wise groups, and at the same time, develop a strategic plan for 'community hardening' as well, as in for example fuel breaks. Several communities have benefited from this approach (as discussed here by [Fire Adapted Communities](#)) while the model for this kind of strategy has just been published by Los Angeles in a FEMA-funded [community and agency plan](#).

The steering committee understands that a Letter of Support from the Board needs to be discussed and agreed by board-members. In the meantime, the steering committee plans to open discussions on 'community hardening' with the Fire-safe Council and on wildfire strategies with a local resident who is a subject matter expert (SME) in forestry management.

Sincerely yours,

Brad Roman, Steering Committee Chair

Tim Quartly-Watson, Steering Committee Officer

Anthony O'Farrell, Steering Committee Officer

Julian Branston, Steering Committee Officer