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Daniel Nibouar

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Daniel Nibouar, Director, Disaster Management
RE: Outdoor Burning Restrictions Informational Update
DATE: July 7, 2026

REQUEST: Informational Only

BACKGROUND: Within Clackamas County, outdoor burning restrictions are implemented through a coordinated, multi-agency framework supported by the Clackamas County Fire Defense Board. Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), local fire districts, and federal land management agencies each establish and implement restrictions within their respective authorities.

Under ORS 477.508, the ODF State Forester is authorized to declare regulated fire season when weather and vegetation conditions increase the risk of wildfire. In western Oregon, regulated fire season typically begins between May and July, depending on weather, fuel moisture, and wildfire risk. This year fire season started in the Northwest Oregon Area on June 15th. During fire season, ODF monitors weather observations and fire behavior indices to determine Fire Danger Levels and associated public use restrictions. ODF may restrict activities that could cause wildfires, including campfires, smoking, commercial equipment uses, and debris burning, and may investigate violations and, in certain circumstances, pursue enforcement actions and cost recovery. The declaration of regulated fire season does not replace or reduce the authority of local fire districts.

Local fire districts have the authority to regulate outdoor burning and implement local burn bans or restrictions under ORS 478.960, and Oregon Fire Code Section 307. In general, the backyard burn season, as defined in OAR 340-264, is March 1 – June 15 and October 1 – December 15, but these dates may change due to weather conditions. This year, all fire districts in Clackamas County closed backyard burn season on June 13th. Backyard burning is the open burning of yard, tree, and garden debris. Small recreational fires, such as campfires and firepits are allowed, unless prohibited by city code or during extreme fire danger. **The Clackamas Fire Defense Board coordinates regularly, at least weekly, with ODF and others to determine if additional restrictions are needed.**

Within Clackamas County there are a few areas that are more restrictive on burning. The Department of Environmental Quality prohibits open and outdoor burning in an area roughly analogous to the Metro Urban Growth Boundary year-round. In addition, some cities are more restrictive, as in the city of Canby and Happy Valley.

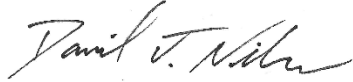
The fire districts within the Washington County Fire Defense Board have implemented similar restrictions to the fire districts on the Clackamas County Fire Defense Board prohibiting backyard, agricultural, and debris burning while continuing to allow small recreational and warming fires, as well as outdoor cooking, provided they meet established size and safety requirements.

The Multnomah County Fire Defense Board, including the City of Portland, has adopted the most restrictive burn ban by prohibiting recreational campfires and fire pits in addition to open burning. The restrictions help reduce the potential for human-caused ignitions, including recreational fires and fires used for cooking or warming by individuals who may be experiencing homelessness.

Clackamas County's approach to regulating fire activities balances wildfire prevention, air quality management, and local operational considerations across multiple fire districts and jurisdictions. Burning restrictions are authorized under ORS 477.508, ORS 478.960, and Oregon Fire Code Section 307, providing state and local agencies with the authority to implement restrictions necessary to protect life, property, and natural resources during periods of elevated fire danger.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational only

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Nibouar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel Nibouar
Director, Disaster Management