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Subject: Public Comment: Prioritizing Streamlined Recovery for Burdoin Fire Survivors
Date: Sunday, September 7, 2025 11:30:26 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-zairted](#)

Good Morning,

Please accept this email as my public comment for the 9/9/25 meeting of the Gorge Commission.

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The devastation caused by the Burdoin Fire in Klickitat County demands an urgent, focused, and compassionate response. As residents begin the long and difficult process of rebuilding their homes, livelihoods, and communities, it is imperative that government agencies—especially the Columbia River Gorge Commission—act as facilitators, not obstacles.

Skamania County demonstrated its commitment to regional resilience by providing fire mutual aid and Emergency Management support during the Burdoin Fire. That same commitment remains unwavering as we move into recovery. The County stands ready to assist in any way possible, and we urge the Gorge Commission to match that urgency and dedication.

The Gorge Commission should immediately suspend all non-essential projects and reallocate staff resources to expedite permitting and recovery efforts for the Burdoin Fire in Klickitat County and support Wasco County with the Rowena Fire recovery. The staff report acknowledges that the current Management Plan lacks clarity and flexibility for disaster recovery. While the proposed amendments are a step in the right direction, they must be accelerated and implemented with the understanding that time is not a luxury for displaced families.

Government should never be a bottleneck to recovery. The two-year application window and rigid construction timelines outlined in the current plan are out of touch with the realities of post-disaster rebuilding. Survivors need flexibility, expedited reviews, and clear guidance—not bureaucratic delays.

Let's be honest: the Gorge Commission is an unelected body. Its role should be to support—not hinder—local residents who are trying to rebuild their lives. Every day of delay is a day that families remain without shelter, farms remain idle, and communities remain fractured.

The Gorge Commission must:

- Suspend all non-critical projects and prioritize fire recovery permitting.
- Provide clear, expedited pathways for rebuilding in disaster zones.
- Collaborate directly with affected counties to ensure local needs are met.
- Reevaluate rigid timelines and offer flexibility for landowners facing post-disaster challenges.
- Communicate transparently and frequently with the public about recovery efforts and progress.

We call on the Gorge Commission to act decisively, compassionately, and with full transparency. Streamline the permitting process. Prioritize fire recovery. Empower counties and landowners. And above all, ensure that the Commission's actions reflect the urgency and humanity this moment demands.

Respectfully,



Rob Farris | District 2

Skamania County Board of Commissioners

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