



SKAMANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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December 12th, 2025

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Attn. Chair Mills
PO Box 730
White Salmon, WA 98672

Dear Chair Mills, Vice Chair Meninick, and Commissioners,

The Skamania County Board of Commissioners applauds the extensive work undertaken by Commission staff, Partner Counties, and the Forest Service to develop the proposed Management Plan amendment that supports disaster recovery for residents affected by the Rowena and Burdoin fires. The collaborative effort reflected in the staff reports and public comments demonstrates a sincere commitment to helping communities rebuild after the devastating events of the summer of 2025.

We write today to express our concern about the possibility of delaying the amendment process any further. The documents before the Commission clearly show that the need for streamlined permitting, temporary housing flexibility, and clear standards for replacement structures is both urgent and well supported by data, field experience, and public testimony. Residents who lost their homes and essential structures cannot afford additional months of uncertainty while they navigate insurance claims, contractor shortages, and the emotional toll of displacement.

Skamania County provided fire response, mutual aid and Emergency Management support during the Burdoin Fire and remains ready to assist our neighboring counties throughout the recovery period. We have seen firsthand how critical it is for local governments to have clear and efficient tools to support residents after a disaster. The proposed amendment provides those tools. It reflects careful review, incorporates lessons learned from multiple fires, and responds directly to the needs expressed by affected landowners.

We recognize the importance of thorough analysis and respect the Commission's responsibility to protect the resources of the National Scenic Area. At the same time, detailed

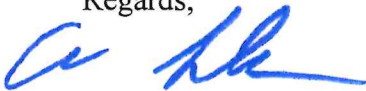


review must be paired with timely action. The longer the amendment remains pending, the greater the risk that families will face unnecessary delays in rebuilding their homes, restoring their livelihoods, and stabilizing their lives. The Commission's own findings acknowledge that conditions in the Scenic Area have significantly changed and that the current Management Plan does not adequately address the scale or complexity of modern wildfire recovery.

Momentum matters. Counties, partner agencies, and residents have invested considerable time and energy into shaping this amendment. Delaying adoption would undermine that progress and prolong hardship for those who have already endured profound loss. We urge the Commission to move forward without postponement and to adopt the amendment so that counties can implement these provisions as soon as federal concurrence is received.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for your attention to the needs of the communities we all serve. Skamania County stands ready to support the implementation of this amendment and to work collaboratively to ensure that recovery in the Columbia River Gorge is both resilient and timely.

Regards,



Asa Leckie
Chair



Brian Nichols
Commissioner



Robert Farris
Commissioner

