

From: Representative Greg Walden Representative.Greg.Walden@mail.house.gov
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News from Representative Walden

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Community Leaders and Concerned Citizens Meet to Discuss Wildfire Smoke



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Southern Oregon concerned citizens, small business owners, and local leaders discuss the impact of wildfire smoke on public health and on our economy

Year after year, people in the West are suffering from the effects of catastrophic wildfires and the smoke that comes with it. People end up having to wear masks, stay inside, and events are canceled. As a life-long Oregonian, I know summers weren't like this in the past. For those who say this is "the new normal," I say "baloney."

This spring, I helped secure some of the most significant reforms to federal forest policy in over a decade, including a fix to make sure the Forest Service doesn't have to rob forest prevention accounts to pay for firefighting costs.

Now, we have an opportunity to do even more. I worked to secure additional changes in the Farm Bill that passed the House recently, such as:

- Harvesting the burned dead trees (where appropriate) after a fire and using the proceeds to plant a new forest for the next generation;
- Expediting response to insect and disease infestation, watershed protection, hazardous fuels reduction, and forest restoration; and
- Streamlining collaborative projects in the forests.

While the Senate failed to include these provisions in their version of the Farm Bill, it's not too late for

them to agree to all or some of these common-sense reforms in the final package. We especially need help from east coast Senators who ignore our problems all too often.

To read more about my efforts to improve forest management to prevent catastrophic wildfires, please [click here](#).



Concerned citizens pass smoke solutions to Congressman Walden

Southern Oregon citizens fed up with the smoke have formed a committee and U.S. Congressman Greg Walden was in town to listen.

The group, representing a wide range of industries including logging, tourism, and real estate shared their ideas and concerns with the Congressman.

[Click here](#) to read more from KOB 5 TV.

Walden Announces Hearing to Examine Health Impact of Wildfire Smoke



As Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I announced a hearing in September to look at the horrible health consequences of the smoke from these catastrophic wildfires. [Click here](#) to view my announcement.

Southern Oregon shouldn't suffer from some of the worst air quality in the world. People should not have to wear masks to go outside, or to breathe inside their own homes. Families shouldn't feel like they are "hostages" in their own homes, as a mother from Medford recently described how her family is coping with hazardous air quality yet again this summer. Yet we are living through all of that as Oregonians, and the consequences are serious.

In an effort to build support across the country for the changes in forest management and firefighting that are needed, I will use my position as Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee to examine the air quality impacts of wildfire smoke. This hearing will call attention to the negative effects wildfires have on our airsheds, environment, and the health of our communities.

We will also address the underlying causes of these unnaturally catastrophic wildfires, and the need to reduce the fuels that have built up in our forests for decades. Recent studies have shown that active

reduce the fuels that have built up in our forests for decades. Recent studies have shown that active management of fire fuels can reduce the size and intensity of wildfires by up to 70 percent and the carbon emissions of wildfires by up to 85 percent. That is something we can all get behind. Who wants to live through more summers with smoke suffocating our communities?

To read more about our upcoming hearing, please [click here](#).



Greg Walden Announces Hearing To Examine Air Quality Impacts Of Wildfire Smoke

During a meeting with local business owners and community leaders in Medford today, Representative Greg Walden (R -- Hood River) announced that the Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a hearing to examine the air quality impacts of wildfire smoke.

[Click here](#) to read more from Klamath Falls News.

Walden Hears from Klamath County Veterans, Gives Update on Increased Help from Congress





It is always an honor to sit down with those who have worn our nation's uniform. In Klamath Falls, I met with a group of veterans to discuss how we can make sure they are receiving the care and support they've earned and deserve from the VA. Last year alone, my office helped 578 Second District veterans with issues regarding disability pay, benefits, and health care.

The House also provided historic funding for the VA to ensure they have the resources they need to boost mental health, opioid addiction, and suicide prevention programs. And we've secured landmark reforms through the VA MISSION Act, which strengthens the VA and improves care for our veterans. Importantly, this law includes a provision I authored to bring medical scribes into the VA system. In the private health care sector medical scribes take the notes while the medical provider remains focused on the patient. It has resulted in a 59% increase in the number of patients doctors can see per hour in the private sector, and we want to bring that success to our veterans and the VA system.

Thank you to the veterans who joined the roundtable in Klamath Falls for taking the time to meet with me, and for your service to our country.

At a meeting organized by the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce, we discussed the positive impacts the tax cuts and regulatory reductions are having on small businesses. Having owned and operated a business from more than 20 years in our district, I know firsthand what it's like to comply with government regulations, pay taxes, and grow jobs.

As with other meetings, this one quickly focused on the horrible impacts of smoke from the wildfires.



Walden talks poor air quality, extreme wildfire season during latest visit

Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., went right into air quality talks during his latest stop in Klamath Falls, saying that current levels are "probably worse than Beijing."

"You can't even go outside," said Walden, who had also just come from a meeting with business leaders in Medford.

[Click here](#) to read more from the Herald & News.

Ranchers Meet in Lakeview to Discuss Upcoming Farm Bill and Regulatory Reform





Lake County farmers, ranchers, and community leaders discussed grazing, forestry and firefighting issues, among other topics during a meeting in Lakeview.

The groundbreaking last month of the \$320 million Redrock Biofuels facility means we'll have a market for the woody biomass from the surrounding forests. And with the change in the law allowing for 20-year stewardship contracts, biomass users will have an increased level of supply certainty. This and other changes we're working on will help grow jobs in our rural communities, provide alternative fuel and energy sources, and clean up the woods.

On the ranching front, we have much more work ahead to make needed reforms to the Equal Access to Justice Act to bring transparency and reduce frivolous lawsuits that impact our way of life in the West. We're also working on federal management plans -- from one end of this giant district to the other -- to make sure ranchers have access to grazing allotments.

Medical Providers, Law Enforcement Gather in Bend to Discuss Combating the Opioid Crisis with FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D.



Thank you to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb (to my left at head of table) for joining me in Bend for a roundtable discussion with local law enforcement and medical providers to discuss efforts to combat the opioid crisis. We need an all-hands-on-deck approach to win this fight.

Combating the opioid crisis that is killing 115 Americans every day is going to require a full-team effort from all of us. That's why I brought FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb to Bend to meet with local law enforcement officers and medical providers to hear firsthand how Oregonians are working together to stem the tide and save lives.

In June, the House passed my legislation -- the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act -- to advance treatment and recovery initiatives, improve prevention, protect our communities, and bolster our efforts to fight deadly illicit synthetic drugs like fentanyl. This bipartisan legislation passed the House by a vote of 396-14, and [represents the largest Congressional effort to address a single drug crisis in history.](#)

But our efforts do not stop there. Recently, I pressed the nation's top opioid makers about their potential role in the crisis. I will continue listening to and working with those most involved in our communities to find solutions to end this scourge.

To read more about the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, please [click here](#).



CENTRAL OREGON'S NEWS LEADER

Walden holds Bend roundtable on opioid epidemic

Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., held a roundtable Tuesday morning in Bend with law enforcement and medical professionals to discuss the opioid abuse crisis and ways to tackle the problem.

Doctors from Mosaic Medical expressed an interest in expanding prescription drug "take-back" programs across the state, drawing nods of agreement from Deschutes County Sheriff Shane Nelson and Bend Police Chief Jim Porter.

[Click here](#) to read more from News Channel 21.

FDA Commissioner Talks Food Safety with Farmers in Central Oregon



Following our opioid roundtable in Bend, I organized an on-the-farm tour and discussion with Commissioner Gottlieb and local farmers to discuss the FDA's implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Having grown up on a cherry orchard in The Dalles, I learned the importance of food safety and good farm practices at an early age. When central Oregon brewers ran into Washington, D.C. bureaucrats a few years back regarding feeding spent grains to cows, I got involved and helped solve the problem. As a result, the spent grain from beer making provides healthy feed for cows which in turn provides beef products to local restaurants.

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Capital Press

The West's **Ag** Weekly

FDA chief reassures Oregon growers over FSMA concerns

Oregon fresh produce growers got some reassuring words from U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb during a stop Tuesday near Bend, Ore.

Implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act has loomed over the fresh produce industry since the law was signed by former President Barack Obama more than seven years ago.

[Click here](#) to read more from the Capital Press.

Top Department of Interior Water Official Visits Central Oregon Canals



Alan Mikkelsen (center-right in green hat) visits central Oregon irrigation projects.

Last week, I brought the top water official with the Department of the Interior to central Oregon to get a firsthand look at the innovative water projects in central Oregon and to hear from local irrigators. We visited several sites in the Bend area, including a newly piped project that saves water for fish while providing a new recreation path for walkers and bikers. Alan Mikkelsen is a familiar face on the ground in Oregon as we work together on challenging water issues in both the Klamath and the Deschutes basins. I appreciate his engagement on matters of such importance to our communities.

Irrigators in central Oregon are leaders in creative and collaborative solutions that ensure water for farms, fish, and spotted frogs. Central Oregon's canal piping projects help our local irrigators conserve water and protect fish and wildlife.



Federal Officials Tour Bend Canal Piping Project

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The canal piping project near Bends' Brookwood neighborhood is now in the beautification stage. Federal officials toured the site Wednesday, along with representatives from the Central Oregon Irrigation District.

COID has finished piping a 3,000-linear foot section of its main canal, in a joint three-month project with the Department of Reclamation. Parks and Recreation will soon develop biking and recreational trails in the area. During Wednesday's tour, Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR) and Department of the Interior Senior Advisor Alan Mikkelsen learned about the project and the effort to conserve water. "From fish and frogs to farmers and recreators, it all comes together right here in these types of projects," said Walden.

[Click here](#) to read more from KBND Radio.

That's all for this update. Remember, you can always keep in touch with me via [email](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

It is an honor to represent you in the U.S. Congress.

Best regards,

Greg Walden
U.S. Representative
Oregon's Second District

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