

March 8, 2019 - Attachment 2  
51178



BRAD LITTLE  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF IDAHO  
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY  
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BG MICHAEL J. GARSHAK  
ADJUTANT GENERAL



BRAD RICHY  
DIRECTOR

March 1, 2019

Senator Michelle Stennett  
Idaho Statehouse  
Room W304

Dear Senator Stennett,

The Idaho Office of Emergency Management is committed to efforts to improve fire safety in Idaho. Idaho ranks as the fifth most wildfire prone state in the country and fire is listed as Idaho's top risk in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP). As captured in the SHMP, Idaho has seen an increase in human caused fires over the last decade. In our 2013 SHMP, it was reported that roughly 46% of the fires were human caused with that percentage increasing over the last couple years to over 70%. With the increase of human caused fires, we continue to support any and all mitigation efforts to reduce the damage across the state of Idaho.

In 2017 alone, Idaho saw nearly 700,000 acres damaged by wildfire. The causes of these fires range from lightning strikes to human caused. In 2018, the Sharps Fire, which started in Blaine County, burned nearly 65,000 acres. This fire was caused by an exploding target and cost \$9.5 million. At least 8 fires in 2018 were confirmed to be caused by exploding targets.

As we have seen across the country and here in Idaho, the damages from a wildfire are not just limited to the fire itself. After a fire is extinguished there is an increased risk to a community for flooding and landslides. The danger for post wildfire flooding/landslides remains high for roughly 3 years after the incident. Although wildfires cannot be prevented altogether, any mitigation efforts made to reduce the number of human caused fires helps keep all Idahoans safe.

Respectfully,

Brad Richy  
Director  
Idaho Office of Emergency Management