CONGRESSWOMAN

MAXINE DEXTER M.D.

OREGON'S 3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Protecting Wildland Firefighters' Health

For nearly 30 years, federal agencies have had clear data showing the serious health risks wildland firefighters face on the job. Meanwhile, structural firefighters began using respiratory protection in the 1970s. Yet today, we are still sending wildland firefighters into dangerous conditions without adequate protection. That is why Congresswoman Dexter has developed comprehensive, solutions-focused legislation in partnership with firefighters, unions, and health experts to finally address these long-overdue gaps. This legislation:

Establishes a Wildland Firefighter Health Task Force & Program

- Creates an interagency Task Force and an Advisory Panel of outside stakeholders to coordinate exposure reduction, pilot respiratory technologies, and develop an updated Wildland Firefighter Health Strategy every 3 years.
- Codifies and funds the Federal Wildland Firefighter Health & Wellbeing Program.

Requires Respiratory Protection Standards

- Permanently establishes a NIOSH Office of Firefighter Health & Safety to develop criteria for new OSHA standards and support longitudinal health surveillance.
- Establishes a 2-year pilot program to test respiratory protection in real-world wildland fire conditions.
- Requires OSHA to issue an interim final standard for wildland firefighter health protection with a final standard within 5 years of the pilot report.

Protects Firefighters During and After the Job

- Requires paid duty time during operations to shower, decontaminate gear, and clean vehicles after smoke or PFAS exposure.
- Requires commercial-grade washing machines for contaminated gear, decontamination areas, and shower access at fire facilities.
- Creates a dedicated OWCP claims unit with specialized training on firefighting exposures to reduce processing delays and increase coordination.

Endorsed By: National Federation of Federal Employees, Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, International Association of Firefighters, National Fire Protection Association, Megafire, Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology, and FireGen Collaborative

Questions? For questions please reach out to Gillian Mead (gillian.mead@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Dexter's office.