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February 27, 2019

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Chair Representative Evans, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Lewis, Representative Meek
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 2503

Chair Evans, Co-Vice Chair Lewis and Meek, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Mazamas, I write today in support of HB 2503. Mazamas (<https://mazamas.org>) is a non-profit organization, founded in 1894 with a mission to inspire everyone to love and protect the mountains. The Mazamas is a robust community of individuals who love to recreate in and protect the outdoors.

Our values as an organization include safety, education, community, competence, credibility, stewardship and respect. We believe that safety is one of our primary responsibilities in all education and outdoor activities. Support of emergency response, recreation response and Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts is aligned with this value, along with other values such as stewardship and respect.

Mazamas understands and appreciates the great challenges that SAR and emergency response professionals in the state face in terms of fiscal support and limited resources. We understand that HB 2503 will create a pathway to study and identify any statutory changes needed to implement agreed-upon recommendations related to SAR operations.

We strongly supports any effort to find ways to improve SAR and recreation response operations so that our response professionals have the capacity and resources to do their work and ensure the absolute best outcome possible for those in need of those services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important topic.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bradham

Interim Executive Director - Mazamas