OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

Chair Paul Evans
Vice Chair Lewis
Vice Chair Meek
House Committee Veterans and Emergency Management

March 16, 2020

Chair Evans and House Veterans and Emergency Management Committee Members,

Good afternoon Committee, for the record, I'm Karl Koenig from the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council. We represent over 3500 career fire fighters and paramedics across Oregon. Today we testify in support of HB 2235.

We as an organization applaud the Chief Sponsor and signors in forwarding this concept to evaluate the key components in providing essential service to Oregonian's during an emergency. We also applaud the planning function that hopefully a study provides prior to another 2020 Fire Season and not an after- action report of 9.0 or greater earthquake.

When evaluating performance in a very labor-intensive operation we must use metrics that objectively evaluate performance against a scientifically based standard. Fortunately for the Oregon Office of Emergency Management such tools exist to evaluate the number of personnel needed to perform the most likely of incidents encountered by career, combination and all volunteer EMS and fire service professionals. The National Institute of Science and Technology and the National Fire Protection Association both did exhaustive studies on fire ground performance at the task performance completion to include the control of fire, response time and number of personnel required to complete those tasks. These scientifically backed studies are our industry "star to steer by" in efficiently and scientifically approaching adequate staffing to mitigate emergency operations whether career, combination or all volunteer fire service providers.

NFPA 1710 for career departments and NFPA 1720 for volunteer departments, outline crew size, response time benchmarks, operational task completion, incident command, incident safety officer requirements and subsequent staffing needs for a single-family residence and the tasks required to extinguish that incident. The comprehensive nature of both 1710 and 1720 also evaluate EMS response capability based on patient outcomes, fire fighter task performance and the arrival of paramedics whether on a fire engine, truck or an ambulance. NFPA 1710 and 1720 standards also address apartment fires, multi-story buildings and initial response to wild land incidents. There is no disaster, whether human caused or otherwise that recommended a specific number of personnel required or needed that OEM could reference due to the

complexity or specifics of any one type of multi-jurisdictional incident. Although we recommend using past experience as a predictor of future performance. The entire State of Oregon was on duty for the 2020 fire season particularly during the month of September last year, with no extra resources available when requested or needed, inside or out of Oregon. It is important to note there are no proponents for a smaller or more efficient Oregon Fire Service regardless of community size, department make up to handle day to day or catastrophic emergencies.

What our recommendation is to use NFPA standards such as 1710, 1720 along with NFPA 1140 Wildland Fire Management and NFPA 1670 Technical Rescue Operations Standard as templates for evaluating Oregon's response capabilities and subsequent recommendations.

After an unimaginable 2020 Fire Season, COVID 19 pandemic and a precipitous rise in requests for service all across Oregon this evaluation could not be timelier.

We would like to thank the Chief Sponsor, the Committee for bringing this essential service evaluation in the form of HB2235 for consideration. The Oregon State Fire Fighters Council urges a yes vote in committee and your support on the floor for HB 2235.

We are available for questions or comments.

Respectfully submitted

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