

February 9, 2021

Representative Paul Evans, Chair  
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management  
Oregon State Capitol  
Via virtual hearing testimony submission

**RE: HB 2295 - Opposition**

Chair Evans, Vice Chairs Lewis and Meek and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association regarding House Bill 2295, which looks to expand the use of private firefighting within a local jurisdiction.

The fire service understands all too well the issues that have faced Josephine County in trying to provide a level of public services to residents that can protect and serve. The issues this county has faced has brought many unintended consequences when their residents are faced with a lack of law enforcement or fire and life safety. This is not an enviable position.

HB 2295 is an attempt to try to find solutions for this area. While we understand the intent, we must oppose the bill **as drafted**. As drafted, the bill would allow private firefighting throughout the state, would open the door to Wildfire Mobilization and Conflagration. The fire service works closely with the Oregon State Fire Marshal's office and Oregon Department of Forestry to provide an integrated and coordinated response to our state emergencies. We also work with the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council to answer that call when emergencies break out. The more we can do to strengthen this system, currently in place, the better it is for everyone in the state.

Josephine County is a county that needs help to meet the safety needs of the citizens. However, opening up statewide regulation and structure to achieve this is not the answer.

We stand ready to answer any questions and provide further insights or information. We will continue to provide the support as we are able to Josephine County as they work to find solutions to strengthen their communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chief Roger Johnson  
Sisters Rural Fire District  
Interim Legislative Chair – Oregon Fire Chiefs Association