



February 11, 2021

Representative Paul Evans, Chair
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Oregon State Capitol
Via remote submission – Oregon Legislative Information System

RE: HB 2927

Chair Evans and Member of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 2927, which is looking at how to modernize Oregon's system of emergency response. The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association works closely with the various sectors of emergency management for our state. In the last year this has included wildfire, pandemic response, vaccine distribution, natural disaster and more. Oregon's fire service stands ready to meet the needs of our citizens. We are dedicated to protecting lives as well as homes and structures throughout our state.

We work closely with the Office of the State Fire Marshal in our work. Oregon's coordinated system of fire response counts on the leadership of OSFM in a wide variety of areas including conflagration and mobilization in emergencies. We would like to express our support for Section 89, which is looking at the renaming and reorganization of the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

This discussion is a long time coming. As Oregon has relied on the fire service in a greater capacity during emergencies, the need for this office to be established as an independent agency is more urgent than ever. Retaining responsibility for conflagration, mobilization and the Fire Mutual Aid System. Search and Rescue, however, should not be a role for OSFM and is better aligned elsewhere.

Defining OSFM as an independent agency will allow the autonomy needed for Oregon's fire response to expand their work in prevention and preparedness and manage the scope of their work more consistently and effectively.

We look forward to this continued conversation to establish the Office of the State Fire Marshal as a distinct agency as we work together to protect our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

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

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