

Submitter: Sarah Merrick

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4113

HB 4113 Testimony

Chair Holvey, Vice Chair Bonham and Grayber, members of the House Committee on Business and Labor,

For the record, my name is Sarah Merrick, resident of House District 21 and a career Salem Fire Department Fighter/Paramedic since 2007. I'm testifying in Favor of House Bill 4113.

I am one of 276 female professional fire fighters in Oregon. I serve the citizens of, and visitors to the City of Salem, including this very Capitol building. In fact, when this building caught on fire back in 2008, I was a part of the crews responsible for mitigating and extinguishing it.

Our mission like most fire departments, is life safety, incident stabilization and to minimize environmental impacts. When entering a burning building as a fire fighter I'm thinking about my assigned tasks, my team's safety, and fire conditions. What I'm not thinking about is contracting occupational cancer as the result of fire conditions, incomplete combustion, or the composition of my gear being laced with carcinogens. This bill corrects the inequity of being a female career fire fighter in Oregon regarding cancer presumption. My course of action today in addressing the Legislature is to ensure the responsibility of correcting this inequity in ORS 656.802.

HB 4113 adds female reproductive cancers along with bladder to the list of presumptive cancers. This list equalizes the "presumption". I am asking you to include these cancers to the presumption considering the exposures and products of combustion in a fire are not gender specific. It seems to me that I should have the same job protections that my male counterparts have had since 2009.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 4113. The inclusion and equity of the cancer presumptions in the bill is your call to protect those who protect you.

Respectfully

Sarah Merrick  
Salem Professional Fire Fighters