

1. My name is Scott Stanton. I'm the Fire Chief for Umatilla County Fire District #1 and I'm providing testimony on HB 2980. First, I want to express my sympathy and understanding that affordable housing is critically important to address in the communities that we all live in.
2. My fire district, like many in the state, provides services to multiple cities and outlying areas. The City of Hermiston and Stanfield do not have its own fire department or ambulance. Fire district 1 supplies those services plus ambulance to the cities of Umatilla and Echo, and part of Morrow County.
3. Unlike cities, who would have the power to authorize these property tax incentives for developers, fire districts like ours are almost completely reliant on property taxes. As a fire district we do not receive any shared state revenue, we can't collect franchise fees for utilities, and we do not receive transient lodging and business taxes.
4. We do receive ambulance revenue, but the vast majority of the revenue we receive for transport in our rural disadvantaged communities is paid by Medicare/Medicaid and does not come close to even covering our costs. We receive no compensation for emergency medical calls that don't require transport which make up a significant percentage of our total calls.
5. While we understand the importance of work force housing in places like Hermiston, fire districts like ours that are already struggling financially should not be expected to provide emergency medical, rescue, hazardous materials, and fire suppression services to additional housing units for free for 10 years. For example, for each 100 additional housing units in our district would require us to have .25 additional FTE's to provide basic lifesaving services for an additional \$27,500 cost. This is not sustainable, when we are already struggling with losing over 1 million in property tax revenues due to urban renewal districts and enterprise zones established for similar goals. I am already 9 firefighters short per NFPA national standards.
6. We are also concerned that these tax increment incentives can be authorized by the city without our approval, even though we are the fire and ems provider for the city. HB2980 does require that we be consulted, but as we've discovered with urban renewal, being consulted often just means being ignored.
7. For this reason I am opposed to this bill as written but propose a carve out for fire districts so we can continue to provide quality life safety services to our community members. THANK YOU for your time and work on this