



JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

Board of Commissioners

Rick Dyer (541) 774-6118
Dave Dotterer (541) 774-6119
Colleen Roberts (541) 774-6117
Fax: (541) 774-6705

10 South Oakdale, Room 214
Medford, Oregon 97501

March 14, 2023

Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair
State of Oregon
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
900 Court Street NE, S-423
Salem OR 97301
Sen.KathleenTaylor@oregonlegislature.gov

Senator Daniel Bonham, Vice-Chair
State of Oregon
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
900 Court Street NE, S-423
Salem OR 97301
Sen.DanielBonham@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: Jackson County's Opposition of Oregon Senate Bill 907 (2023)

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business:

We, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners, strongly oppose Oregon Senate Bill (SB) 907. This legislation is problematic for public employers, such as Jackson County. The very meaning of public service is, "a service rendered in the public interest." As we review SB 907, in its current form, we struggle to identify how this legislation would ensure that Jackson County employees perform the work our residents require when disasters strike.

The September 2020 wildfires, in our County, including the South Obenchain and Almeda Fires, required Jackson County employees to respond to the incident, not run from it. County staff set up emergency operation centers, constructed emergency evacuation sites, performed mass evacuations, and assisted in immediate response to disaster survivors. Many of these employees did so while their own homes were under evacuation orders, with many providing aid in areas that were actively being evacuated. This type of response is required of public servants for, without them, who else will do the work in times of need. SB 907 allows employees to choose whether they want to respond or flee from emergencies, which is likely to have a severely negative impact on emergency response at all levels in Oregon.

If SB 907 passes, what would the outcome be of the Cascadia Subduction Zone event, which all levels of government are actively planning for response to. If the majority of our collective public employees at the State, county, and city levels left work during the Cascadia Subduction Zone event, who would respond to save lives, property, and ensure the health and safety of all Oregonians?


Chair Taylor
Vice-Chair Bonham
March 14, 2023
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The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division (OSHA) has the ability to utilize existing tools and authorities granted to them in the Oregon Revised Statutes and Oregon Administrative Rules to ensure employers provide a safe work place for their employees. SB 907 goes far beyond current workplace safety standards, and grants employees the right to leave when the public needs them the most.

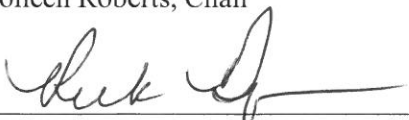
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,

JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Colleen Roberts, Chair



Rick Dyer, Commissioner



Dave Dotterrer, Commissioner

:jb/mc

By: Electronic Submission through the Oregon State Legislative Testimony Submission Portal