



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

House Committee on Emergency Management,
General Government and Veterans

Chair Representative Dacia Grayber
Vice Chair Rick Lewis
Vice Chair Thuy Tran

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Tran and Lewis,

For the record my name is Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters and we represent 3700 career fire fighters and paramedics throughout the great State of Oregon.

We are here to testify in favor of House Bill 3484, also known as the OSFM Fire Fighting Costs Fund. This fund pays for a number of firefighting activities to include pre-positioning of apparatus during extreme fire weather, aerial firefighting operations and allows for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant and operational assistance to include the Oregon Legislature Assembly for firefighting costs in every two year period. You as lawmaker may ask was the current system broken? In some ways yes, when called for conflagration assistance fire departments and fire Districts; career and volunteer must wait for moneys, sometimes as long as two years and often the Federal Government for repayment of labor costs. Emergency Boards of the Legislature are not necessarily timely or possible when the Federal Government is involved which happens often here in Oregon. This prevents the over extension of local fire department or fire district reserves, spending them down for labor and equipment response to a statewide conflagration, rapid response or prepositioning response.

Pre-positioning or Pre-po as it's called in fire house jargon is the strategic and tactical placing of fire apparatus given extremes in weather, natural disaster, or any reason to suspect a geographic area has a very high likelihood of a significant event occurring. This follows the adage of "Keep Small Fires Small" by increasing the weight of attack where the fire starts with a rapid staffed response. The "Prepo" and immediate responses happened 11 times last fire season, on fires that were growing faster than a typical conflagration response would take to activate and on a smaller scale, effectively keeping resources in place as opposed to a much larger conflagration response but not as nimble force back in quarters serving the local communities. Preventing fires of any size from growing and becoming a conflagration is not a star to steer or fire problem we like to have. It is a fact that people's encroachment on the rural brings the fire to us quicker and quicker each year. There is little denial that extremes in weather, or that our debate over forest management plays a significant part too. We have the recent history of the Labor Day



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Fires of 2020 reminding us that weight of attack matters, weather, and solid public policy matter.

All the paths of accountability, transparency, and solid legislation to keep small fires small and taking care of local fire districts and departments are essential, HB 3484 does just that.

House Bill 3484 is one policy piece that is proven to make a difference at the front door of every home in the path of fire during extremes of events. Please answer the call for the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office and your local fire fighters with this well thought out legislation and successful experience in delivering fast reliable immediate and pre-positioned response to all of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If the Committee has any questions, please ask.

Regards

Karl Koenig s/s

Karl Koenig
President
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council