



North Lincoln Fire & Rescue District #1

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March 24, 2023

Senator Mark Meek
Senator Brian Boquist
900 Court St.
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB1068

Dear Committee Chair Meek, Vice Chair Boquist, and Committee Members,

I am providing written testimony in support of SB 1068. When most Rural Fire Protection Districts were formed, their boundaries often contained void spaces due to no homes or buildings being built on rural properties. As communities continue to grow, homes and buildings have been built on those once-vacant properties which were never incorporated into the Fire Districts. Some owners were never made aware that they don't have fire protection, and some don't care. All too often we are given the line "just bill me if you come out".

This issue brings problems and unfairness not only to the Fire Districts but also to those living within the confines of said District who pay for fire protection. Property owners who are incorporated in the District end up covering the cost for those who are not and, in most cases, receive the same service. We are not just talking about fire response. This often includes Emergency Medical Services. Rural Fire Districts across the state constantly need to evolve to meet the needs of their growing communities. This includes but is not limited to buying more apparatus, hiring additional staff, or even building new stations. All of these things affect our Districts and those who live within its confines. This normally results in Districts having to reach out to their voters to request a bond or levy to ask for additional operating funds to meet the increased needs of the Fire District.

Rural Fire Districts must respond to all calls within its boundaries, regardless of the property address. The Fire District cannot take the risk of not responding to a call because the address is not one of its incorporated properties, all too often a wrong address is given or the fire may spread beyond the property of origin to a neighboring incorporated property. In today's litigious society, a Rural Fire District must do everything it can to protect itself and its constituents.

We know that the passing of this bill will not likely bring in significant amounts of tax monies. I feel the Fire Service in Oregon has accepted that reality. All we are asking for, is to make it fair and equitable for those who live within the Fire District and pay their taxes for fire service and their neighbor next door who does not and receives the same service from the Fire District. I respectfully ask that you support SB 1068, move it to the

chamber floor and support its passage there as well. If the last several years have taught us anything, it is that our Emergency Responders need assistance too.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cody D. Heidt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'C' and 'H'.

Cody Heidt
Fire Marshal