Lookingglass Rural Fire District
7173 Lookingglass Road
Roseburg, OR 97471
March 8, 2023
7:00PM

May 3, 2023

TO : Oregon legislature.gov

FROM : Steve Rhodes, Volunteer Fire Chief

Subject : Written Testimony SB 1068

Please accept this letter as our District endorsement for SB 1068. As a rural Fire District, we provide service to all residences and lands within our official boundaries, whether they pay taxes to us or not. We also have areas that we are closer to and provide service to, even though they are not officially ours. Within our District boundaries, we have approximately 1300 dwellings that pay assessed property taxes, and have 63 developed lots or dwellings that have either withdrawn from our District over the years or never joined when they built. At our tax rate of $0.5077/1000, an average home is taxed $150-$200 per year for fire protection. Because of our mutual aid with all Departments in Douglas County, that also gets air resources, heavy wildland equipment, and as much manpower and fire equipment as we can request. Our total income from tax revenue is currently $85,000 per year.

The dwellings that do not pay into our District receive the same resources and equipment without funding them. We do not have the ability to, nor would we ever, refuse service because they do not help fund our District. Yet when the build or Improve their land, they are subject to County taxes including law enforcement, they are included in the Douglas Forest Protective Assoc. for wildland protection, they are assigned and taxed to a school district, they are taxed for the OSU extension office, the UCC College District, etc. But existing dwellings within our District that are not members are not required to pay for fire protection, while expecting to receive these services. I believe Senate Bill 1068 will remove this inequity and allow us to provide equal service for an equal tax to our residents. All residents will pay the same for the same services.

Steven A Rhodes, Volunteer Fire Chief
Lookingglass Rural Fire District