



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alan Ferschweiler, and I am testifying on behalf of the Salem Fire Firefighters and the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council in support of HB 4072.

Salem has substantial amounts of state-owned land, which the fire department services but gets no compensation or revenue for. The Capitol building in which we sit today is an example of this issue; if an medical emergency happens in one of the chambers or the 2008 third alarm fire that occurred in Governors Ceremonial Office in the Capitol occur the Fire Department receives no funding for these services. Those within these state buildings still expect the City of Salem to provide a well-trained and well-staffed fire department to respond, even though for some reason the State of Oregon believes they should not pay for these services. As the city has seen growing challenges with its budget, essential services have been unable to keep up with need. If nothing changes, the city may be forced to consider cuts to the fire department even as the city grows. This would have disastrous consequences for the services that Salem Fire Department can provide to state-owned properties, and the city as a whole.

HB 4072 would help prevent this outcome by adequately compensating Salem for the fire services that it already provides and ensuring that these services continue. The bill directs payments specifically towards fire and first response, enhancing the quality of these services going forward. These funds could provide increased staffing, training opportunities, modern apparatus, and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) on a more regular replacement schedule, and the possibility to remodel and build new fire stations.

One of the important provisions is that this is not a bill that expands the entire State of Oregon. Although the communities of Roseburg, Pendleton, Gresham, and Bend all are affected by this issue the bill is limited to the City of Salem so that objectives can be met and reported to the legislature on the effectiveness of the bill. If the bill doesn't obtain the objective goals to enhance public safety, then the expansion of this concept could not be expected to proceed any further than the City of Salem.

I urge you to vote for HB 4072 so that the City of Salem can continue to provide the high-quality fire services on which state-owned buildings rely.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alan Ferschweiler
Legislative Director
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council