



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
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DATE: February 13, 2024
TO: House Committee on Rules
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: House Joint Resolution 201, a constitutional amendment

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Helfrich and Kropf, and members of the Rules Committee:

The Lane County Board of Commissioners adopt a series of Legislative Priorities in advance of each Legislative Assembly, including:

- Establish a stable funding source for County Emergency Management

SJR 201 is aligned with this principle, and for this reason, we are supportive of SJR 201 and ask that the Committee schedule this bill for a work session to move it to the floor of the House with a DO PASS recommendation.

Representative Evans has been consistently hearing from Lane County regarding funding needs for emergency management, resiliency, response, and recovery since the wildfires of 2020. In his role as Chairman of the House Special Committee on Wildfire Response, and as Co-Chair of the Subcommittee on Public Safety, he well understands the role that local governments play when natural disasters strike and how complicated response and recovery is for local communities. We appreciate that the solution he is proposing will be adopted only if voters across Oregon support it through the election process.

Lane County is still reeling from the ice storm that afflicted our county just last month. Residents were without power across the County, many roads were unpassable, telecommunications were disrupted, and local businesses were shuttered for days. Unlike the wildfire events of the past three summers, there was barely a corner of the County that was not affected. Eight counties declared emergencies, and the costs for response and recovery will easily exceed \$100M. The federal government will help, but typically only pays for 75% of the costs through its Public Assistance program. Oregon is almost fully without a framework to address matching funds and local funding for capacity building, and the two-bill approach that is before your committee today would provide real tools for Emergency Managers and local governments across our state.

Lane County understands the reticence that Oregonians have for new taxes, and that the property tax mechanism proposed in this measure is a new concept. Our lived experience, however, tells us that this tax is modest, shared by all, and will not negatively impact the revenues of the 83 taxing districts in Lane County. We urge your support.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER