



To: Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

From: Chief Brian Stewart
Clackamas Fire District
Oregon Fire Chiefs Association & SDAO Fire Districts

Chief Ben Stange
Polk County Fire District No. 1
Oregon Fire Chiefs Association & SDAO Fire Districts

Date: February 19, 2025

Re: HB 3219 – Testimony in Support of Sustained State Funding for the Oregon Hazards Lab

Dear Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Harbick and Fragala, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our strong support for the critical work being done by the Oregon Hazards Lab at the University of Oregon in the area of wildfire detection and monitoring. At the end of the 2025 build-out, the lab will have 75 cameras installed across the state. These cameras are part of a coordinated network of wildfire detection cameras within the state and across the west.

The Oregon Hazards Lab is an essential partner of the Oregon Wildfire Detection Camera Interoperability Committee. The committee's work ensures that there is a growing, coordinated, and integrated system of early detection, event confirmation, and situational awareness for firefighters and the public. There are approximately 150 cameras installed and operated by three entities - Oregon Hazards Lab, Oregon Department of Forestry, and PacifiCorp – with more camera installations planned.

This growing, statewide system offers a valuable capability by sending immediate alerts to firefighters at the earliest sign of a wildfire. The time saved through early detection, coupled with the ability to assess the situation and determine an appropriate response before arriving at the scene, makes this technology a vital component of Oregon's wildfire detection strategy. Once a wildfire is detected, the system provides access to cameras that allow firefighters to monitor the fire's progress. In communities near active fires, it is not uncommon for fire chiefs to continuously monitor the growth and trajectory of the flames through this camera network, ensuring they are adequately preparing their communities for any potential impacts.

We request your support in passing HB 3219 to secure this essential wildfire detection and early mitigation assistance capability.