

Submitter: John Olson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3870

My name is John Olson, and I serve as the President and CEO of the McMinnville Area Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of our Chamber and the business community of McMinnville, I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 3870, which would allocate \$3 million to the McMinnville Fire District for land acquisition, planning, and construction of a much-needed new fire station in Northwest McMinnville.

#### The Need for Improved Emergency Services in McMinnville

The McMinnville Fire District serves a growing and diverse community, covering 98 square miles with only one primary fire station—soon to be joined by Station 15 on 3 Mile Lane, which will house administration and future fire service operations. However, even with this addition, response times remain a serious challenge due to the size of the district and the increasing demand for emergency services.

The current facility in NW McMinnville is inadequate, as it is a rented house that only accommodates an ambulance crew. This facility:

- Lacks the ability to house fire engines or additional emergency response vehicles, which are critical for timely fire suppression efforts.

- Requires emergency personnel to don protective gear outdoors, even in severe weather, delaying response times and reducing operational efficiency.

- Exposes life-saving equipment to extreme temperatures, with ambulances needing separate heating to protect essential medications.

#### Impact on Public Safety and the Business Community

Reliable emergency response services are not only vital to public safety but also to the economic stability of our region. Delayed response times and inadequate infrastructure:

- Increase risks to businesses and homeowners, leading to potential losses and longer recovery times in the event of a fire or medical emergency.

- Drive up insurance rates, making it more costly for businesses to operate and homeowners to secure affordable coverage.

- Limit the district's ability to expand its services, which is crucial as McMinnville continues to grow.

With the funding provided by HB 3870, the McMinnville Fire District would be able to:

Procure land and begin planning for a new fire station in NW McMinnville.  
Improve response times and emergency readiness by housing additional fire engines and personnel.  
Enhance firefighter working conditions, ensuring better preparedness and efficiency.  
Position the district for future growth, including accommodating volunteers and deploying wildland firefighting resources closer to vulnerable areas.

#### Conclusion

The McMinnville Area Chamber of Commerce strongly urges your support of HB 3870 to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents, businesses, and workforce. Investing in emergency response infrastructure is a direct investment in the economic stability and sustainability of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

John Olson  
President/CEO  
McMinnville Area Chamber of Commerce