



To: The House Committee on Revenue

From: Chief Brian Stewart
Clackamas Fire District
Oregon Fire Chiefs Association

Chief Ben Stange
Polk County Fire District No. 1
EMS and Fire Chapter of SDAO

Date: April 24, 2025

Re: HB 3489 – Testimony in Opposition – Severance Tax

Chair Nathanson, Vice – Chairs Reschke and Walters, and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the Oregon wildfire funding legislation. This testimony is submitted by the **Oregon Fire Chiefs Association**, the **Oregon State Fire Fighter Council**, the **Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association**, the **Oregon Fire Districts Directors Association**, the **Oregon Fire Marshals Association**, and the **Fire and EMS Chapter of SDAO**. Representatives of each of these groups participated in the Oregon wildfire funding workgroup and many participated in the subcommittee on landowner rates and forestland classification. We write today in opposition of HB 3489 and in support of the work and recommendations of the Oregon Wildfire Funding workgroup.

As part of the Fire 35, we were privileged to serve on the Oregon Wildfire Funding workgroup. In addition to the breadth of the Oregon fire service, the workgroup's membership included individuals representing diverse perspectives such as landowners, public health, ranchers, environmental protection, tribes, and insurance. Additionally, we had excellent support and engagement from the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon State Fire Marshal, the Governor's Office, and four legislators as ex-officios.

The work of the Fire 35 was framed by the 2024 budget note – consisting of finding recommendations for durable and sustainable funding for ODF and OSFM, adjustments to the ODF fee structure, and the intersection of forestland classification with rural fire protection districts. During this months-long effort, the workgroup evaluated and considered over seventy-five concepts to address the budget note requirements. Through discussion and deliberation, assistance from the agencies, and other experts, the Fire 35 was able to recommend six solutions for funding for ODF and OSFM. Additionally, the work of the workgroup resulted in an adjusted ODF rate structure and modifications to forestland classification.

The workgroup did not recommend a severance tax as a solution nor the changes to the ODF funding structure found in HB 3489. As such, we encourage the legislature to lean into the funding solutions that

were recommended by the Fire 35. Beyond the recommendations for OSFM and ODF funding, HB 3940 contains a pairing of adjusted ODF rates and forestland classification modifications. We continue to engage with other stakeholders and anticipate another amendment on the finer points of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 3489.