



To: The House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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 29, 2025

Re: SB 862 – Testimony in Support

Chair Tran, Vice – Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and members of the committee,

We are honored to testify in support of Senate Bill 862 on behalf of the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Chapter of the Special Districts Association of Oregon.

The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association represents fire service leaders across the state who are committed to advancing fire and emergency services through leadership, education, and collaboration. The Fire and Emergency Services Chapter of SDAO provides advocacy and resources for special districts tasked with delivering essential fire protection and emergency services to Oregonians.

SB 862 is the product of a thoughtful and collaborative work group established under HB 2522 (2023), which directed the Office of the State Fire Marshal to convene stakeholders to review and modernize ORS Chapter 478, relating to rural fire protection districts. The OFCA and SDAO Fire and Emergency Services Chapter were actively engaged participants in this process, working alongside partners such as the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association (OVFA) and the Oregon Fire District Directors Association (OFDDA).

We believe SB 862 accurately reflects the consensus recommendations of the work group and addresses the need to update outdated statutory language, clarify existing authorities, and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of fire protection districts across Oregon. Among other improvements, SB 862 enables fire districts to better manage emergency evacuation routes, modernizes reporting requirements to the State Fire Marshal, and provides for the adoption and maintenance of a base fire prevention code — essential tools in today's evolving wildfire and emergency landscape.

We sincerely appreciate the State Fire Marshal's leadership in this effort and are grateful for the opportunity to work collaboratively on legislation that strengthens public safety in Oregon communities.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Oregon's fire and emergency services. We respectfully urge your support of SB 862.