



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
Fire and EMS Chapter of SDAO

Date: May 1, 2025

Re: HB 3940 A – Testimony in Support with Adoption of the Dash 7 Amendment

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 support of HB 3940 A with the Dash 7 amendment.

As members of the Oregon Wildfire Funding workgroup over the last 10 months, we worked diligently with individuals from a broad spectrum of stakeholder groups, including: landowners, public health, ranchers, environmental protection, tribes, and insurance. This group quickly earned the moniker of the “Fire 35” because of its efforts, collaboration, and desire to serve as a team and speak as a team.

This group of stakeholders, with the excellent support from the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Department of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), the facilitation consultants, and ex-officios, met its charge and identified “options for sustainably funding wildfire mitigation, suppression and mobilizations, land classification, and managing the intersection between forest land protection districts and structural fire protection districts.” (SB 5701 (2024) Budget Reconciliation Measure Budget Note # 5).

These funding solutions include new funding sources, opportunities to utilize general fund dollars, and contribution by all Oregonians and visitors. These are found in HB 3940 A and two (related to the kicker and the lottery) are in other bills. Additionally, the Fire 35 also worked diligently on revisions of the ODF rate structure and on forestland classification’s impact on rural fire protection districts (RFPD). These two components of HB 3940 A Dash 7, are interconnected and the legislation reflects a solution when both components are considered as one.

We recognize that there is much discussion on certain funding sources in HB 3940 A. After months of deliberation and striking dozens of options, the workgroup supported each of these sources as meeting the intent of the budget note and the workgroups shared principles. The Fire 35 intended to offer these as a slate of options for the legislature's consideration. Some or parts of these six funding solutions may be the best solution for Oregon. We ask that the legislature support ODF and OSFM with no less than the \$280 million requested in the governor's recommended budget.

The workgroup, and a subcommittee, spent the needed time to understand the ODF's rate structure and the impacts of forestland classification on rural fire protection districts. The ODF funding process is complex. The effects of forestland classification on rural fire protection districts is complex. Ensuring that landowners are able to sustainably work their land is complex. Yet, HB 3940 A Dash 7 includes solutions that, together, address these issues and are supported by Fire 35 stakeholders. It is important that both solutions are passed as each helps support Oregon's complete and coordinated wildfire system, and we appreciate the thoughtful discussions with stakeholders that contributed to the policy before you today.

Whether a fire starts in the forest or in the built environment, we know that Oregonians face threats across the landscape. The Oregon Department of Forestry and structural fire agencies work together seamlessly during the wildfire season – each bringing their personnel and unique resources – to keep fires small and protect the public. Much like fire districts do not typically provide bulldozers or aircraft, ODF does not provide the services that RFPDs provide.

Properties in rural fire protection districts receive service from RFPDs around the clock, 365 days per year and receive all our services, such as: EMS, structure fires, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and water rescue. Whether there is a structure on the property or it is unimproved, there is human activity which cause RFPDs to respond to these lands for entrapments, horses stuck in creeks, cardiac arrests, traumatic injuries, escaped fires, and many other types of incidents incident types.

Together the state agencies and the local fire service protect Oregonians. HB 3940 A with the Dash 7 amendment provides the support they need and meet the workgroup's principles to "reflect shared responsibility and benefits among all Oregonians and visitors to the state" and "aim to maintain high standards of service (meeting missions for protecting life, property and natural resources)". The Oregon Fire Service supports the policy components and funding of no less than \$280 million for ODF and OSFM. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and we encourage you to pass HB 3490 A with the Dash 7 amendment.