Submitter: Peter Kokopeli

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4100

I would like to thank the Committee on Emergency Management and Veterans for allowing me to testify today on the issue of financial responsibility for facilities located at the CEI Hub on the Willamette River.

I would like to speak about what happens in the first 24 to 48 hours of an emergency.

Under Oregon DEQ policy the federal Lead agencies in case of oil and hazardous materials incidents are the US EPA and the Coast Guard and they appoint the On-Scene Coordinator. This unified command structure anticipates the likelihood that in a major disaster local resources are quickly overwhelmed and federal help must be brought in.

If a major earthquake occurs in Oregon then FEMA is the federal lead.

FEMA and EPA have experienced significant budget cuts and staff reductions. Meanwhile, the Coast Guard under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) umbrella is currently not funded.

Given the resource challenges facing federal agencies at this time the prudent course for the state of Oregon is to assume that state and local resources will have to fill the gap in the event of a major disaster.

This is where the financial responsibility requirement provided by this bill comes into play. If a major incident occurs at the CEI Hub the On Scene Coordinator, who could be a State official, will know that funds are immediately available. For example, if there is a need for emergency housing to move impacted members of the community to safety the On Scene Coordinator can skip right over the part about "How are we going to pay for it" and go straight to "Let's move".

There is an important add on benefit to this legislation. It provides a financial incentive for CEI Hub operators to take additional steps to improve safe practices. Studies have shown that investments in loss prevention have a high rate of return. Requiring financial responsibility for CEI Hub facilities makes this a top line priority.