



SALEM FIRE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF – 370 TRADE ST. SE, SALEM, OR 97301 – (503) 588-6245

February 12, 2026

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Nosse, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Salem Fire Department, I write in strong support of ongoing funding for the Safe, Clean, and Healthy Capital City initiative.

We are working closely with the City of Salem and the Salem Police Department to implement this initiative. Our agencies align staffing, response strategies, and outreach efforts to improve safety, livability, and public health in the Capitol Mall area and surrounding core neighborhoods. This collaboration strengthens accountability and ensures public resources are used efficiently.

The Fire Department plays a central role through the REACH team, which includes a paramedic, an EMT, and a Marion County mental health clinician. This co-response model addresses emotional disturbances, overdoses, and other health emergencies with a coordinated, patient-centered approach.

Since the REACH team launched on January 20, 2026, we have connected more individuals with appropriate services, including shelter, addiction treatment, and mental health providers. We are reducing repeat calls for service and limiting unnecessary ambulance transport and emergency department visits. These outcomes improve patient care while preserving fire and EMS resources for life-threatening emergencies.

The Capitol Mall area includes facilities of statewide importance. Due to the high concentration of State-owned buildings, the City of Salem loses an estimated \$7.6 million in property tax revenue each year that would otherwise fund public services. The Safe, Clean, and Healthy Capital City initiative addresses resulting service demands in a focused, accountable way.

The projected \$2,750,000 cost for fiscal year 2027 represents a targeted investment in public safety, system efficiency, and community health. Without sustained funding beyond July 1, 2028, the City will not have the capacity to maintain this level of service.



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The Salem Fire Department strongly supports securing stable, ongoing funding to ensure the continued success of this initiative. This investment protects critical state facilities, strengthens emergency response, and improves outcomes for vulnerable members of our community.

Sincerely,

David Gerboth

David Gerboth
Fire Chief
City of Salem Fire Department