



## SALEM PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Local 314 of the International Association of Fire Fighters

February 13th, 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

### **Re: Support for Capital Funding - Safe, Clean, and Healthy Salem Initiative**

Esteemed Co-Chairs and Members of the Subcommittee,

On behalf of Salem Firefighters Local 314, I write in strong support of the City of Salem's 2025-27 Capital Funding Request submitted to the Joint Committee on Ways & Means Capital Construction Subcommittee for the Safe, Clean, and Healthy Salem initiative.

As first responders serving Oregon's capital city, Salem firefighters witness daily the complex public safety challenges present in and around the Capitol Mall. The concentration of essential state government facilities, community service providers, businesses, and vulnerable populations creates a unique operational environment requiring coordinated, sustained investment. From the fire service perspective, the need addressed in this project is not theoretical, it directly impacts emergency call volume, responder safety, and long-term community risk reduction.

Encampments and unmanaged public spaces often present elevated fire risk from open flames, propane heating sources, and improvised electrical systems. They also generate increased emergency medical responses related to overdose, untreated mental illness, chronic disease complications, and crisis-driven behavior. These incidents place strain on fire and EMS resources and create safety concerns for both responders and the public accessing Capitol-area facilities.

The Safe, Clean, and Healthy Salem initiative—along with the expansion of the Homeless Services Team (HST) and complementary outreach efforts such as the REACH pilot program—represents a proactive and coordinated response model. By focusing on outreach, service connection, and stabilization rather than enforcement alone, these programs reduce repeat 9-1-1 calls, improve interagency coordination, and help prevent crises from escalating into fire or medical emergencies.



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Investment through capital construction and related public safety funding mechanisms ensures that the necessary infrastructure, staffing capacity, and program support are in place to sustain this coordinated model. As Oregon's capital city, Salem carries responsibilities that extend beyond municipal boundaries. Ensuring safety, cleanliness, and accessibility around the Capitol Mall is not solely a local concern, it is a statewide interest affecting legislators, state employees, visitors, and residents from across Oregon.

We respectfully urge your continued support of direct funding to sustain and expand the Safe, Clean, and Healthy Salem initiative as outlined in the submitted Capital Project Information Form.

Strategic investment in coordinated outreach and public safety infrastructure will yield measurable improvements in safety, service delivery, and community well-being.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this request. Salem firefighters stand ready to continue partnering with state and local leaders to keep the Capitol Mall safe for all who live, work, and visit here.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Matthew D. Brozovich  
President IAFF Local 314  
[president@salemfirefighters.net](mailto:president@salemfirefighters.net)  
503 - 480 - 4473