



P.O. BOX 9 • AURORA, OR 97002

HB 2177 -- Income Tax Credit for Rural Firefighters
House Veteran' Services and Emergency Preparedness Committee
Thursday March 21, 2013
Chair Matthews and Members of the Veteran' Services and Emergency Preparedness

Committee:

Last evening the Board of Directors of the Aurora Rural Fire Department voted unanimously to support HB 2177 and to testify today in support of this measure which recognizes the sacrifices of our rural firefighter volunteers. This bill would provide a \$250 tax credit off the Oregon tax return to offset the costs that volunteer firefighters incur in their volunteer service to our rural communities.

The Aurora Rural Fire District has 35 volunteer firefighters who serve a 64 square mile area in northern Marion County, including the Cities of Aurora and Donald, 8 miles of I-5, the Aurora State Airport, gas transmission lines and two railroad right of ways. If you drive between Portland and Salem, you drive through the middle of our fire district.

In 2011, we went on 632 emergency calls and over half of those were medical emergency calls. Volunteer firefighters are expected to train over 150 hours just to get their basic firefighter certification. Many of our firefighters then trained another 150 hours to get their Basic Emergency Medical Technician certificates. When these volunteers attend these and other training throughout the year they are sometimes taking leave from work and also time away from their families to serve our citizens and those that pass through our District when they are in need of emergency services. Our Board has done their best to recognize and provide for our firefighters but not all costs are reimbursed. These dedicated volunteers will pay for wear and tear on their own clothing, and transportation expenses to emergencies and drills and which cause them unreimbursed expense. They do not complain, they make and complete their commitment because they want to serve their community.

Our Board of Fire Directors unanimously supports HB 2177 because it helps recognize this service and sacrifice for the safety and emergency assistance of other citizens in our communities. Although their unreimbursed personal expenses may exceed this \$250 amount, this tax credit makes a positive impact on the personal budgets of those who serve. It is an important way of saying 'Thank You' for your self-less service to other citizens when an emergency occurs.

The Aurora Rural Fire Protection Board thanks Representative Boone for bringing HB 2177 forward and we urge the committee to end it to the Oregon House with a 'Do Pass' recommendation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rod Yoder".

Rod Yoder – District Chief