



OREGON FIRE DISTRICT  
DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION  
EDUCATION • COORDINATION • LEGISLATION

1284 Court Street N.E. • SALEM, OREGON 97301  
1-800-223-9708 • (503) 378-0896 • FAX (503) 364-9919

**Testimony before the House Veterans and  
Emergency Preparedness Committee  
In Opposition to SB 422  
April 30, 2013  
Genoa Ingram**

The Oregon Fire District Directors Association (OFDDA) was formed in 1950 and serves the elected public officials of over 200 Fire Protection Districts throughout Oregon, all Special Districts formed under ORS Chapter 478. The five-member governing boards are responsible for the financial and management oversight of the Districts. They serve without compensation.

The OFDDA opposes SB 422 for a number of reasons, but primarily because it undermines the very purpose of a Special District. Special Districts are unique units of government in that they are formed for the purpose of providing a *single* specified service to those they serve. They are authorized to tax their constituents for the purpose of providing those services.

If voters wish to have additional law enforcement or any other service, they may currently vote to fund those services. If not, they may choose not to fund them. It is up to the voters. For fire districts to tax their constituents for fire service, then use the dollars collected to fund a different type of service, circumventing the intent of the voters who believe they are paying for fire protection, is not a transparent process.

Rural Fire Protection Districts take seriously their commitment to the public to provide fire protection. Making them responsible, either directly or indirectly, for funding other services seriously compromises their ability to make decisions in the best interest of the citizens to protect them against loss of life and property due to fire.

In the event of another economic downturn, fire district Boards will be placed in the position of having to choose between fire protection funding and law enforcement funding, creating a conflict of interest.

Funding options are already available to law enforcement. Counties may put forth levies to voters for Enhanced Service Districts, just as is being successfully accomplished in both Clackamas and Washington counties. If citizens wish to have additional coverage, they can already choose to fund it, rather than leaving it up to fire districts to choose for them.

Fire Service entities throughout the State oppose 422 for the reasons mentioned above.

**Please vote NO on SB 422**