



OREGON ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

April 28, 2015

The Honorable Brian Boquist
Chair, Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee
State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Boquist:

On behalf of the Oregon Association of Broadcasters I am writing to commend your attention to House Bill 2210A, which is an important piece of legislation dealing with emergency preparedness capabilities to protect the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to explain this bill to you and your colleagues in more detail. In simple terms, the bill does this: It allows credentialed and trained persons who work at Oregon's radio and television stations to have access to their facilities and equipment during times of emergency.

The access is critical if these broadcast stations are to be able to continue operating to inform the public about emergencies – and, it is fair to add that, in some cases when cell phone sites and electric power distribution sites are out of commission, over-the-air (terrestrial) broadcasts are the only way to inform and protect the public.

We are indebted to the work of Representative John Huffman, a former broadcaster, for helping us prepare House Bill 2210A and to bring it to you for your consideration and attention.

The OAB has prepared a one-page fact sheet on the credentialing process in the bill, which I have submitted for the record.

Oregon's more than 200 radio and television stations spread around the state appreciate your consideration of this bill. We have worked with a number of other organizations - the State Office of Emergency Management, the Association of Oregon Counties, the Oregon Emergency Management Association, the Association of Chiefs of Police, the State Police, the Fire Marshals and the cable TV industry to gather their support.

Thank you for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Johnstone', with a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Johnstone
President & CEO
Oregon Association of Broadcasters

cc: Members, Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee
OAB Board of Directors

Attachment: How it works



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Here's how it works:

The Oregon Association of Broadcasters (OAB) will maintain a database of qualified individuals who will be allowed into the emergency areas for the specific purpose of keeping stations on the air in the event of an emergency. This database is shared with the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and local law enforcement and is valid throughout the state.

Each Oregon broadcast facility would submit a list of qualified mission-critical personnel to the OAB along with a notice that a disaster-recovery plan is in place and operational at the facility. The mission-critical personnel would include engineers, engineering technicians, operations personnel, emergency information gatherers, and other bare-minimum people needed to deliver critical engineering and/or IT help to get the station back on the air, and lifesaving information to the affected community. Law enforcement or emergency management will make additional decisions on other personnel as the situation warrants.

To become qualified as a "First Informer Broadcaster," station personnel would need to take on-line or in-person courses so they will be safe in the emergency zone, and understand the management structure of the emergency zone. There are a number of different on-line courses, and some are free. Each course will require a time and financial commitment on the part of the potential First Informer Broadcaster or the individual's employer. The OAB will also schedule special sessions during their annual Fall Conference in order to help individuals receive their certification and ID card which will be issued at the successful completion of these courses.

Some of the training courses include:

Introduction to Incident Command System: This course is an introduction to the Incident Command System which will be in place in the event of a widespread incident;

NIMS, An Introduction: This course introduces the National Incident Management System, and provides a template for all concerned to work together during domestic incidents;

Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS): This course provides information about the IPAWS system, and gives broadcasters the best tools to understand the emergency messages being sent through their systems;

Fundamentals of Emergency Management: This course describes how various governmental agencies work together for a unified response to an incident. It provides a structure for Preparedness, Prevention, Protection, Recovery, Response, and Mitigation of Hazards.

These courses are available on-line and are free. <http://training.fema.gov/is/nims.aspx>