



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 25, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

RE: Senate Bill 15

Chair Barker and members of the committee, I am Michael Gower, Assistant Director of the Operations Division for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of SB 15 and answer any questions.

What the Bill Does:

SB 15 expands the authority of the Oregon State Police Superintendent to appoint DOC transport employees as special state police officers to assist in all department transport functions and duties.

Background Information:

Current statute states that the Superintendent of State Police may appoint DOC employees as special state police officers if the Superintendent deems it necessary or advisable to assist DOC in the discharge of DOC's *medical* transport functions and duties.

We have a longstanding agreement with State Police and a practice of allowing DOC transport staff to carry firearms when they conduct *any* transport functions and duties, not just medical trips. Transports can occur for medical reasons, extraditions, simply moving an adult in custody from one facility to another, and courtroom visits.

Amending statute would enforce current practice and eliminate any confusion.

Issues Addressed by the Bill:

If passed, this legislation would amend ORS 181.263 to expand the existing authority of the State Police Superintendent to designate DOC transport employees as special state police officers, which would assist DOC in the discharge of all of its transport functions, such as medical trips, extraditions, courtroom supervision/security, and interstate transfers. Public safety best practices require this extra layer of security in the community, which helps protect the courts, public, and law enforcement personnel. This also mitigates potential litigation in the event of a justified discharge of a firearm to prevent escape, death, and/or serious injury.

Requested Action:

For the reasons explained above, the department asks this committee to vote SB 15 out of committee with a do pass recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any question you may have.

Submitted by:

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