



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

Joint Special Committee on Corona Virus Response

March 19, 2020

Co Chair Senator Roblan and Co Chair Representative Holvey,
Committee Members

The Oregon State Fire Fighters Council is very concerned over the thought of “Self Service for all” policy consideration.

Your front-line firefighters serve all communities throughout Oregon without prejudice when the need arises. We see this virus in its early stages as a community effort and we are all hands-on deck. This proposal by our fuel retailers feels like a circumvention on time tested policy on who can fuel our vehicles.

Oregonians are currently experiencing a dramatic change in how they interact with one another, how they seek medical care, gather groceries and unfortunately pay for groceries. The consideration of beginning of self-service fueling is a disaster waiting to happen.

The Governor has directed us to enforce social distancing, school closures, restaurant service limitations and now this suggestion from our fuel retailers?

No scenario for the firefighters involves dealing with a self-service fuel fiasco. We are the stewards of public safety and this concept is not in line with our values or in any way consistent with what we are dealing with every single day.

Imagine a high-volume fuel stop backing up into the street while a one of our valued citizens gathers a crowd of people to help fuel their vehicle, going in a complete opposite direction of the Governor’s social distancing directive. Imagine the number of unwashed hands exchanging contact on frequently touched items. The lack of training and the cost of rolling out a program to ensure everyone’s safety is a function of government. I’m personally part of the current Overhead team working with the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s office. We are at critical mass for new projects, this concept is in direct conflict with our current mission. Keeping Oregon safe, confident their government is focused on it most valuable resource, its people. Self Service Fuel hardly meets that threshold.

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The same arguments over safety and the safe operation of a dangerous commodity needs serious consideration. When deciding on policy change to ease a purported labor shortage we must exhaust all options before we jeopardize any Oregonians safety and livelihood.

Oregon's Fire Fighters are poised to respond to whatever it takes to get through this. We also know that new paradigms are not usually saved for crisis situations like this one.

Your Oregon State Firefighters urge a delay of any policy change regarding Self Service Fuel for all of our safety and predictability in these volatile times. Rarely does "easy fix" and "the right thing" intersect. This is one of those easy fixes that solves nothing but the creation of an unsafe practice at the expense of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Karl Koenig /s

Karl Koenig
President
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council

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