



**To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee**

**From: Chief Jeff Groth,**  
President, Oregon Association Chiefs of Police &  
Chief of Police, City of Sherwood

**Date:** January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Re: Support for HB 2046**  
Maintaining a staffing level of at least 15 patrol troopers per 100,000 residents  
of this state, beginning January 1, 2030

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger and members of the committee; thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify. I am here on behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, in support of HB 2046. I believe it is time to build a plan for adequately staffing the Oregon State Police through the 10-year plan envisioned in the bill.

In my role as the President of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, I'm making it a priority to travel throughout Oregon to visit with my colleagues and to try to understand their work and their challenges. In Oregon, we have 64 police agencies with less than 10 sworn officers where the police chief pulls shifts and responds to calls for service in addition to managing the daunting challenge of running their departments. For these agencies, OSP is a critical part of accomplishing the law enforcement mission.

The impact of a lack of state troopers isn't limited to our smallest departments. For instance, Sherwood (the city I serve), like many other communities, has a state highway running through the middle of town. Presently, and due to an inadequate number of state troopers, our agency is forced to respond to crashes, DUII drivers and speeders on Highway 99W. This additional burden is straining our limited law enforcement resources and is a responsibility we can't continue to carry. We simply don't have the resources and our communities expect us to be in the neighborhoods and school zones and not on the state highway. This isn't just a Sherwood issue, it is a challenge that police agencies are facing throughout Oregon.

Please understand, I have a great partnership with OSP, having known and worked with

Superintendent Hampton for almost 30 years, and the Oregon Chiefs Association has an equally strong partnership with OSP, but OSP is not able to fulfill their critical public safety role because of profoundly inadequate staffing levels. I think we can be very proud of our strong partnerships at every level in public safety, but partnerships alone cannot address our lack of policing resources around the state. Oregon has the lowest number of police officers (city, county and state) per 1000 population in the United States. As Superintendent Hampton mentioned in his testimony, there are large areas of the state where we cannot provide 24 hour police coverage.

Our police chiefs and Sheriffs in Oregon consider the Oregon State Police an essential and critical part of our public safety system in Oregon. They are the backbone that connects us and the partner that allows us to create safe highways, interstates and communities. Adopting the 10-year plan envisioned in HB 2046 is a top priority of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. It is a public safety issue, it is a traffic safety issue and it is an officer-safety issue. We hope you will join us in supporting HB 2046.

Thank you.