



March 19, 2019

Representative Paul Evans
Chair
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street
Salem OR 97301

Chair Evans and Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and background on HB 3167, relating to Urban Search and Rescue (USAR). The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association sincerely appreciates the work of Representative Nathanson in bringing this important program to the forefront of conversation regarding Oregon's public safety and emergency preparedness system of response.

It is important however to note that search and rescue knows no boundaries in our state. We participate in calls for help from all areas of the state in response to natural disaster, transportation accidents, collapsed trenches, structural collapse, or earthquakes to name just a few of the types of responses that use USAR. The acronym, while Federally designated, should not be misconstrued to indicate search and rescue only happens in an urban setting. Incidents occur statewide.

It is important to ensure that investment in USAR will result in increasing our capabilities and response throughout the state. Public safety has worked cooperatively in previous USAR programs in order to meet those statewide needs with the limited resources available. HB 3167's provision to engage the State Fire Marshal in a study to determine recommendations for current search and rescue capability in the state is a step in this direction. This report should also consider how to spread resources throughout the state for best availability of responses.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren Bucich". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Chief Darren Bucich, President
Oregon Fire Chiefs Association

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