



**OREGON FIRE DISTRICT
DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION**
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1284 Court St NE | Salem, OR 97301
1-800-223-9708 | 503-378-0896 | Fax: 503-364-9919

Statement of Support: HB 4041
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
February 4, 2020 – 3:00 pm
Genoa Ingram

The Oregon Fire District Directors Association (OFDDA), formed in 1950, serves the elected public officials of over 200 Fire Protection Districts throughout Oregon, all Special Districts formed under ORS Chapter 478. The five-member governing boards, who serve without compensation, are responsible for the financial and management oversight of the Districts.

The Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association (OVFA), formed in 1957, offers an annual training conference for volunteers, both members and non-members, providing hands-on and classroom training as well as networking opportunities. These conferences rotate around the state, helping educate and train Oregon's 7,800 volunteer firefighters who must adhere to the same training requirements as paid firefighters.

Both associations strongly support SB HB 4041 which, among other provisions, changes the name of the "Office of State Fire Marshal" to "Department of the State Fire Marshal" and establishes the department as a stand-alone state agency independent from the Department of State Police. It also restores certain authority that existed prior to 1993.

Both the OFDDA and the OVFA have a long history of support for the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and its many fire and life safety programs. Our members participate on its committees and task forces, and provide input as to how best to serve the citizens of Oregon.

The Office of State Fire Marshal was created in 1917. At that time the State Insurance Commissioner served as the State Fire Marshal until 1963 when the OSFM separated from the insurance commissioner and was established as a stand-alone agency reporting directly to the Governor. In 1993, the OSFM was placed under the Oregon State Police. While the Fire District Directors had concerns at that time relating to resources, funding, the protection of the Fire Insurance Premium Tax, and the ability of the OSFM to operate independently, our Association did not object to the new structure.

As time passed, the fire service has watched as the autonomy of the OSFM appeared to weaken in favor of other public safety programs and policies. HB 4041 addresses our concerns, and we are in full support its passage.

We understand that there are numerous amendments. We support the base bill, which also establishes the Office of Emergency Management as a stand-alone agency, independent of the Oregon Military Department. And, we support the addition of seven new members to the Oregon Homeland Security Council, as well as the remaining provisions of the bill. However, if the bill as introduced does not move forward in its entirety, we would support amendments that address the autonomy of the Office of State Fire Marshal.

Thank you for your kind attention. We encourage passage of HB 4041 as introduced.
