



Oregon State Fire Fighters Council urges your support of House Bill 2915

HB 2915 is a simple amendment to ORS 656.802(4), ensuring that this statute applies to Portland firefighters. This statute became law in 1961, creating a presumption for firefighters whereby “heart and lung” diseases (technically listed as “disease of the lungs or respiratory tract, hypertension or cardiovascular-renal disease”) are presumed to be covered as compensable conditions under Oregon workers’ compensation law.

The City of Portland, Bureau of Fire and all Portland firefighters are exempt from that law. Two other presumptions (cancer and PTSD) have become law in recent years and those new presumptions were specifically adopted by the legislature to include Portland firefighters. It is time to finally fix the original “heart and lung” presumption so that it will also cover Portland firefighters, the same way it covers all other professional firefighters in Oregon.

Why is HB 2915 needed:

In one word, fairness. The legislature should fix a law that has become ineffective. Portland firefighters should have the same coverage for “heart and lung” diseases as all other professional firefighters in Oregon. While the Portland City Charter has a “presumption” for firefighters to cover heart disease, that City Charter presumption is worded significantly different than the presumption in ORS 656.802(4). The application of that difference has now been legally interpreted to render the Charter presumption significantly less effective than the presumption in ORS 656.802(4).

With the proposed amendment to ORS 656.802(4), the “heart and lung” presumption which covers all other professional firefighters in Oregon, and which remains an effective presumption for these firefighters, would apply to Portland.

The same concept (HB 4062) was introduced during the 2020 Legislative Session and unanimously passed the full House of Representatives, and unanimously passed out of the Senate Labor and Business Committee, but didn’t have a full vote in the Senate before adjournment.

For Questions, Please Contact:

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