



**Marion County**  
OREGON

Board of Commissioners

February 3, 2022

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House Committee on Revenue  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

Danielle Bethell, Chair  
Colm Willis  
Kevin Cameron

**CHIEF  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
OFFICER**

Jan Fritz

RE: Marion County Supports HB 4097

Dear Representative Nathanson and House Committee Members,

The Marion County Board of Commissioners supports House Bill 4097, which will create an income tax credit for volunteer firefighters. The Labor Day Wildfires swept through the Santiam Canyon, burning 193,556 acres in Marion County. These fires highlighted just how critical volunteer firefighters are to our communities.

Many Oregon communities operate with almost all volunteer firefighters. Even before the pandemic and recent wildfires, smaller communities consistently face recruitment and retention struggles with volunteers. Volunteer firefighters sacrifice time and money to attend required trainings to maintain DPSST certifications and purchase personal protective equipment many small fire districts can't afford, just to keep their communities safe. After the wildfires, many communities lost current volunteer firefighters, some leaving because of losing their homes in the fires. What little funds these departments have are now threatened by a shrinking tax base. The additional struggles added by the wildfires have made a difficult situation worse.

Local communities need to be given the tools to be able to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. HB 4097 gives a much needed and deserved tax credit to our volunteer firefighters. A volunteer firefighter would receive a credit of \$1,000 towards personal income taxes each year that the firefighter completes certain volunteer service requirements. These tax savings will lessen the burden on rural communities working to keep their communities safe.

Thank you for your continued work to support our volunteer firefighters and rural communities. The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges a yes vote on HB 4097.

Sincerely,

  
Danielle Bethell, Chair

  
Colm Willis, Vice Chair

  
Kevin Cameron, Commissioner

BOC: RTB