



Lane County Office of Emergency Management

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Submitter: Patence Winningham, Matt McRae

On behalf: Lane County Emergency Management

Committee: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee-Public Safety

Measure: HB5017 – Testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the proposed budget for the Oregon Department of Emergency Management.

We commend the legislature for going to great lengths to reinforce and strengthen the emergency management resources at the state level. The Legislature has provided essential attention and focus to the needs of state agencies, including Emergency Management, State Fire, Health Authority, and Human Services, all of which have benefitted from increases in staff and funding. There's no question that the time, money, and attention given to these agencies has truly strengthened our state's ability to respond to emergencies both large and small. In short, we support increased investment in statewide emergency management capabilities.

There is still much work to be done, however, as outlined in the first slide of the ODEM Presentation. Per ORS 401.032, responsibility for emergencies resides at the local level. Counties *must* have an established emergency management program, whereas cities *may*. So the primary funding source (FEMA's Emergency Management Performance Grant) is spread more thinly across the mandatory county programs as more municipal programs are created. To be sure, more local capacity in municipalities is a good thing but we need to see increased legislative investment in local capacity as we've seen in state capacity in the past few years. Local governments are responsible for planning, training and exercising all five mission areas in alignment with the National Preparedness Goal: protection, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery. We are the first to arrive and the last to leave. It is this resource that we are not seeing in the ODEM budget proposal.

Recovery from the 2020 Labor Day fires is far from over and increased capacity to support long term recovery is crucial at this point. With additional resources ODEM can help streamline the coordination for local governments who are currently coordinating recovery with at least ten different state agencies. We would like to see this addressed through ODEM leadership and reflected within the ODEM budget.



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Local communities are approaching emergency management activities in very different ways with very different results. There remains a significant opportunity to learn from each other and replicate the most effective practices, but efforts to share and learn from each other have been fragmented. With additional mitigation and recovery resources, ODEM will be well positioned to support improvements by institutionalizing practices of systemic learning.

Given the seismic risk in Western Oregon, and given warming temperatures that are increasing the risk of wildfires, floods, and heatwaves, we strongly support investments in our state and local capacity to prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate. We value the role this committee plays in setting priorities and encourage you to consider including Local County Emergency Management Program representatives in supporting effective state and local emergency management capabilities.

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