



**Statement of Support:
HB House Bill 5036
OSFM Budget
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety
April 4, 2023**

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 8,760 volunteer firefighters who must adhere to the same training requirements as paid firefighters. Both associations are in support of HB 3484 and 3485.

The OVFA and the OFDDA could not be more supportive of the Office of State Fire Marshal and HB 5036 which will enable the new stand-alone Department to carry forward its many directives. Having worked closely with the fire service beginning in 2001, I have seen the responsibilities assigned to the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) expand into the many programs currently under its oversight. The OSFM has never faltered. Nor have the Chief and her staff ever been unresponsive to requests for assistance, information, or participation in training efforts.

While the OFDDA, in particular, strongly advocated the return of the OSFM as a stand-alone agency, we also recognize that this move represents a significant challenge and investment to insure its success. With increasing responsibilities and season after season of catastrophic wildfires, the OSFM needs our support more than ever. Both the OVFA and the OFDDA stand ready to support and assist the Department as it has supported and assisted us.

Whether it be assistance with training, staffing innovative forums such as the Oregon Life Safety Team, emergency response coordination both in and out of State, the Office of State Fire Marshal is living up to its commitment to the citizens of Oregon.

The Department is standing on the precipice of an exciting new future. We cannot emphasize enough our support or encourage the legislature to give the Department the tools it needs to build on that future. We thank you for placing your faith and trust in the Office of State Fire Marshal and strongly encourage your support of its budget as contained in HB 5036.