



**Lebanon Fire District**  
1050 West Oak Street  
Lebanon, OR 97355

**Phone: (541) 451-1901**  
**Fax: (541) 451-6101**  
[www.lebanonfire.org](http://www.lebanonfire.org)

May 2, 2023

Senate Committee on Finance & Revenue

Chair Meek, Vice Chair Boquist, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1068 (SB 1068) and the reasonable modifications to statute related to the inclusion of lands into rural fire protection districts. SB 1068 provides an option for rural fire protection districts to establish a coverage area within seven road miles of a fire station that is recognized by a fire insurance rating organization, and has equipment and personnel to respond to 9-1-1 calls.

A major current challenge for rural fire protection districts such as ours is a decline in revenue streams. Since "special districts" are not adequately defined in the federal U.S. Code, we have also been excluded from receiving any financial help through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) during the pandemic. With declines in regular revenue streams and no chance of financial assistance from the federal government, it puts undue strain on districts like us. However, the passing and implementation of SB 1068 provides an opportunity to ease that strain.

Currently, homeowners in close proximity to existing district boundaries are still receiving the same response coverage and benefits as their neighbors without paying their share of taxes to the district. These homeowners may elect to petition for annexation into the district, if they are even aware of the issue, or may choose to continue without paying taxes for their current services. By giving the authority to the rural fire protection districts to establish a seven-mile coverage area, we can ensure that homes are adequately protected, and that the district responsible for the protection is adequately compensated. SB 1068 guidelines are consistent with established policies set by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), and requires coordination with neighboring fire protection agencies as well as public notice to homeowners within the coverage area.

While Senate Bill 1068 will not solve all the challenges that come with increasing population growth and development in the wildland urban interface, it is a logical and reasonable step in the right direction. I urge the committee to pass SB 1068.

Respectfully,

Joseph Rodondi  
Fire Chief, Lebanon Fire District