



February 4, 2026

TO: Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Diehl and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as the Fire Chief of the City of Albany Fire Department in full support of HB 4156 and the positive impact it provides for fire departments that deliver ambulance services in Oregon. GEMT funding is crucial to the success and sustainability of these services.

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Ambulance Billing
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Station 11
Lyon Street &
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Station 12
34th Avenue &
Lyon Street SE

Station 13
Three Lakes Road &
18th Avenue SE

Station 14
Gibson Hill Road &
Grandview Drive NW

Station 15
3215 NE Transition Pkwy
Millersburg

The Albany Fire Department provides a full range of fire protection, emergency medical transportation, and all-hazard response services to approximately 75,000 residents across Linn and Benton Counties. Our service area includes 82 square miles of fire protection coverage and 202 square miles of ambulance service.

The department operates five fire stations strategically located throughout the cities of Albany and Millersburg. We respond to approximately 12,000 incidents annually. Of these calls for service, roughly 10,500 are medical in nature, resulting in approximately 6,500 ambulance transports each year.

The addition of Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) funding has been a game changer for our department. Through this program, we receive approximately \$800,000 annually, allowing us to staff an additional Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance with single-role EMTs and paramedics on a 24/7/365 basis and remount or purchase new ambulances. This unit has been critical in helping us keep pace with increasing service demand and serves as our primary resource for interfacility transfers between hospitals.

The loss of GEMT funding would have a significant and immediate impact on our ability to deliver emergency medical services. We would be forced to reduce the single-role ALS ambulance 24/7/365 coverage. In addition, we would need to seek alternative funding sources to replace aging ambulances or continue operating units well beyond their intended replacement schedules, increasing maintenance costs and operational risk.

It is important to emphasize that HB 4156 does not increase state costs. GEMT funding is essential to maintaining service levels within an already stressed statewide EMS system.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of emergency medical services in Oregon.

Respectfully,

Chris LaBelle

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