



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

February 4, 2026

Re HB 4080

Oregon House Committee on Climate Energy and Environment
Chair Representative John Lively
Vice Chair Representative Mark Gamba
Vice Chair Representative Bobby Levy

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba, Vice Chair Levy and Committee members,

For the Record, I am Karl Koenig President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council, representing the 3800 career fire fighters, paramedics, wildland and prevention personnel across the entire State. Our role in the building is to assure the maintenance and improvement of the “Big Five”, Wages, hours, working conditions and our safety. Today I’m going to focus on fire fighter safety in our testimony

We are in opposition of House Bill 4080 for several reasons that are important for process and safety but take a complimentary opinion of that of our colleagues in the electrical trade. As a career fire fighter myself for over 30 years we train, pre-fire plan and evaluate our performance constantly. Safety is not just a word but a practice that requires focus, training and constant reevaluation of your surroundings. In this Bill and the rumored -1 amendments are a safety nightmare for the following safety reasons;

1) Access to and exiting a structure with one or more “balcony panels” obstructing egress or entrance in the event of primary exit blocked by fire or other obstruction. In my career I have several rescues that required me to use the deck or balcony to exit a burning apartment. Imagine a panel in the way when trying to carry or assist a victim or another fire fighter exiting with a large solar panel in the way preventing or slowing the only way out.

2) Power to the Balcony Panel, currently the Bill does not address the “constantly on” feature of Solar Panels. Whether we are involved in a rescue, extinguishment or checking for fire extension in adjoining apartments, we must secure the panel by covering or removing entirely from the balcony prior to making entry into a structure. This takes

precious time and labor we can't spare in an emergency. Exposing fire fighters and residents to energized electrical panels in an emergency situation is perilous at best.

3) Fire fighters and our fire prevention professionals often spend time evaluating situations where the caller does not know what might be burning but they do know how to call for help. When we arrive to an emergency we try to alleviate the problem whether fire, EMS or preventing an emergency in the first place. The unregulated equipment proposed in this bill does not provide the necessary safeguards that any other appliance has to have to be in a residence or business in the United States and particularly in Oregon. Our ability to trouble shoot and deal with a non-certified or regulated device is unthinkable. We understand a -1 is potentially forthcoming, which remains to be seen, but anything short of a National Electrical Code and subsequent UL Certification is not acceptable in our opinion.

There are several of my colleagues testifying to day on the technical aspects of installation, service and impacts to a "out only" electrical system. Code compliance and certification of these products is clearly needed and the omission of that by legislative means is dangerous for the public and its fire fighters. We think those requirements override the need for legislatively directed "cheaper easily accessed supplemental power."

We are aware of the escalating costs of power and the impacts of rate increases to those who rent or don't have the ability to place solar on their residence. It is problematic financially but not an reason to legislatively permit the installation of a unchecked power producing unit without typical evaluation and certification .

Please Vote No on HB 4080! Safety First, your fire fighters need that in this instance!

If you have questions, please ask and we will do our best to answer them!

Karl Koenig
President
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council

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