



CROOKED RIVER RANCH FIRE & RESCUE

6971 SW Shad Road, Crooked River Ranch, OR 97760
Phone: (541) 923-6776 | Fax: (541) 923-5247
www.crrfire-or.gov

February 2, 2026

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

My name is Sean Hartley, and I serve as Fire Chief of Crooked River Ranch Fire & Rescue. I am writing in support of House Bill 4156. Our agency provides emergency medical services to the Crooked River Ranch community and surrounding rural areas of Jefferson County, covering a large geographic service area with a population of 5,500 and limited nearby EMS resources. Like many rural providers, most of our call volume is medical in nature, and we frequently operate with extended transport times and limited system redundancy.

Funding received through the Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) Program has been essential to sustaining EMS operations in our rural setting. GEMT revenue helps offset the true cost of providing ambulance transport in an area where call volumes, payer mix, and transport distances make full cost recovery impossible. These funds have supported staffing stability, allowed us to maintain consistent ambulance coverage, and helped ensure our responders have the training and equipment necessary to provide high-quality patient care.

If GEMT funding were disrupted due to the loss of the current federal Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) model and no alternative mechanisms were available, Crooked River Ranch Fire & Rescue would face immediate operational challenges. A lapse in funding would likely require delayed hiring, deferred equipment replacement, or service-level adjustments. A permanent loss of GEMT funding would place significant strain on our ability to staff ambulances, maintain response capability, and continue providing timely EMS services to a geographically isolated population with limited alternatives.

House Bill 4156 provides a critical contingency to prevent these outcomes. If the federal government continues to allow the current IGT funding structure, nothing will change. This bill does not expand GEMT and does not extend additional state funding. It simply ensures that, should federal policy change, rural EMS agencies like ours can continue receiving GEMT payments without interruption and without risking sudden service impacts to the communities we serve.

Thank you for your time and for your continued support of emergency medical services, particularly in Oregon's rural communities. I respectfully urge your support of HB 4156.

Sincerely,

Sean Hartley, Fire Chief
Crooked River Ranch Fire & Rescue