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

My name is Rob Bullock, and I serve as Fire Chief of Central Douglas Fire & Rescue. I am writing in strong support of HB 4156.

Central Douglas Fire & Rescue serves primarily suburban and rural communities surrounding the City of Roseburg. Douglas County is among the more economically challenged regions in Oregon and has a disproportionately high number of Medicare and Medicaid recipients. In 2025, our agency responded to nearly 4,000 emergency medical calls, resulting in approximately 2,400 patient transports to area hospitals.

Because of the high percentage of Medicare and Medicaid patients we serve, reimbursements for EMS services frequently fall well below the actual cost of providing care. The Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) program has been critical in helping offset this shortfall. Our agency receives approximately \$479,000 annually through GEMT. These funds allow us to maintain appropriate staffing levels, purchase essential medical supplies, and continue delivering reliable emergency medical care to our community.

The cost of staffing, equipment, and medical supplies continues to rise at a pace that significantly exceeds Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates. Without GEMT funding, the financial gap associated with EMS delivery would increase substantially and place our current service levels at risk.

A lapse or elimination of GEMT funding would force our agency to reevaluate staffing models, reduce medical supply inventories, and adjust overall service delivery. Ultimately, these reductions would impact patient care and response capability, particularly for residents who rely most heavily on emergency medical services.

It is important to emphasize that HB 4156 does not require new state funding. Instead, it provides practical safeguards should federal policy changes affect the current funding methodology. The bill establishes alternative mechanisms to maintain a stable, uninterrupted funding stream for GEMT. If no federal changes occur, the current GEMT funding method would remain in place. HB 4156 simply ensures that options exist to prevent disruptions if federal policy shifts.

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Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I respectfully urge your support for HB 4156.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Bullock".

Rob Bullock
Fire Chief
Central Douglas Fire & Rescue