



## **POLK COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO.1**

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**Ben Stange, Fire Chief**

**February 5, 2026**

**From: Ben Stange, Fire Chief**  
**On behalf of Polk County Fire District No.1**

**RE: HB 4121 – Letter in Support**

**Chair Tran, Co-Chairs Lewis and Watanabe, and Members of the Committee**

HB 4121 represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking investment in Oregon's emergency response and resilience infrastructure. From the perspective of a local fire district responsible for protecting a growing and increasingly complex community, this bill aligns directly with the operational needs we face every day and during major incidents.

First, I would like to highlight the importance of reliable, well-coordinated emergency communications and 911 services. Our regional 911 center is the backbone of emergency response for various fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies across Polk, Marion, and Lincoln Counties. When residents dial 911, they expect rapid call processing, accurate information gathering, and immediate dispatch of the right resources. HB 4121 capitalizes on the unique opportunity to incorporate an essential, working dispatch center with a working training center for emergency call takers from across the State.

I also want to express strong support for the provisions related to firefighter health and wellness, including the Department of the State Fire Marshal's study of health coverage disparities between paid and volunteer firefighters. Firefighting is inherently dangerous work that places significant physical and mental demands on those who serve. Ensuring equitable access to medical evaluations, preventive care, and health coverage is critical to maintaining a capable and resilient fire service. This is a great first step and acknowledgement of the need to provide medical assistance to all firefighters across the state regardless of their agency's financial position.

HB 4121 recognizes that preparedness is not a single program or agency, but an interconnected system. By strengthening coordination, investing in regional capacity, supporting training, and addressing responder health, this bill moves Oregon toward a more resilient future.

On behalf of Polk County Fire District No. 1, I respectfully urge your support of House Bill 4121.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment to public safety.