



SALEM FIRE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF – 370 TRADE ST. SE, SALEM, OR 97301 – (503) 588-6245

February 4, 2026

House Health Care Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Written Testimony in Support of HB 4156 – Protecting GEMT Funding

To the Members of the Committee:

My name is David Gerboth, and I have the honor of serving as Fire Chief for the City of Salem Fire Department. I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of HB 4156. The Salem Fire Department provides ground emergency medical transport and emergency medical services to the Salem community and surrounding areas. Emergency medical services represent a significant portion of our emergency responses and are a core public safety function for the residents and visitors we serve.

The City of Salem Fire Department established its EMS program using a conservative financial model. The system was intentionally designed to operate without reliance on General Fund dollars to subsidize emergency medical services. Even within this model, GEMT revenue is critical to the program's long-term viability. These funds support reinvestment in the EMS system, including staffing stability, training, equipment replacement, and operational improvements that directly impact patient care and response reliability for this life-saving service.

A lapse in GEMT funding would result in an immediate reduction in reinvestment in the EMS system pending legislative action. A complete loss of GEMT funding would significantly impair our ability to sustain service levels over time. Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements alone are insufficient to support long-term EMS delivery. GEMT revenue helps stabilize the system and prevents costs from being shifted to local taxpayers.

If the federal government continues to allow the current Intergovernmental Transfer funding model, this legislation results in no change. HB 4156 does not create new state funding obligations or extend additional state resources. Rather, it provides continuity and stability in the event of federal policy changes and protects local EMS systems from sudden funding disruption.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge your support for HB 4156.

Sincerely,

David Gerboth
Fire Chief
City of Salem Fire Department