

Submitter: Robert Sowdon
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management and Veterans
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4121

Chair and Committee members,

HB 4121 – Creates new agency within the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

SPARTICIS (Oregon Statewide Preparedness Authority) – entirely new office with multiple responsibilities for emergency preparedness coordination
SPARC (Statewide Preparedness Authority for Response Coordination) – new office for training and database management
Statewide Regional Training Office – new office to manage emergency training facilities
Oregon Disaster Recovery Authority – new advisory group for emergency recovery.

A number of bills for preparedness programs have been passed, and this bill carved out pieces of those programs just for the sake of creating a new agency and growing government. There is no reason these changes couldn't be added to existing programs that already handle them without a new agency and may not need additional funding.

Authorizes bonding for public safety projects. Requires state agencies to designate liaisons for emergency management.

Imposes duties on the Oregon Department of Emergency Management related to management of emergency preparedness assets.

Modifies the definitions of and grant requirements for Resilience Hubs and Resilience Networks.

Authorizes certain training facilities to host overnight training activities.

Authorizes the Oregon Department of Emergency Management to obtain fingerprints of employees or contractors.

Authorizes counties to waive certain civil penalties related to food service facilities during emergencies.

Requires the Department of the State Fire Marshal to study health coverage for firefighters.

Requires legislative committees to identify a revenue source for certain public safety programs.

Establishes grant programs for emergencies.

HISTORY:

State Preparedness and Incident Response Equipment (SPIRE) Program: In 2017,

the Legislature established the SPIRE program through House Bill 2687. This program enables the state to purchase and strategically pre-place emergency equipment—such as rescue boats, all-terrain vehicles, and water purification trailers—for use by local agencies during statewide emergencies like a Cascadia earthquake. The program has been expanded through subsequent funding, including a \$5 million bond measure in 2020.

OEM Restructuring and Independence: In 2022, the Legislature passed House Bill 2927, which transferred OEM from the Oregon State Police to a standalone agency with its own dedicated funding, enhancing its operational independence and authority.

Emergency Management Advisory Councils: In 2021, House Bill 2927 established the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council (EPAC) within the Governor's Office, tasked with providing policy recommendations on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The Local Government Emergency Management Advisory Council was also created to advise OEM.

Emergency Operations and Training: The Legislature has supported the development of the State of Oregon Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and the State Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP), which guide training, exercises, and readiness efforts. In 2023, the Legislature approved funding for 41 new OEM positions and a 24-hour operations center, enhancing real-time response capabilities.

County-Level Preparedness Grants: In 2025, the Legislature enacted a new grant program (Senate Bill 505) to fund emergency preparedness coordinators in coastal counties (Clatsop, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Lane, Lincoln, and Tillamook), strengthening local disaster readiness.