



**EMS SECTION – OREGON FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
727 CENTER STREET N.E. SUITE 300
SALEM, OR 97301**

To: Sen. Bates, Co-Chair; Rep. Kotek, Co-Chair; and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Mark Stevens, President, EMS Section of Oregon Fire Chiefs Association

Regarding: Testimony regarding SB5529

Date: March 29, 2011

Dr. Mel Kohn's March 28, 2011 presentation proposes to dramatically increase re-licensure fees of emergency responders.

Although we agree that EMS is in need of funding, we feel it grossly unfair to use this as a means to balance the entire Oregon Health Authority (OHA) budget. The proposed increases would cause significant financial burden to Oregon's fire and EMS services. Of our state's EMTs, 40% are volunteers and our fire/emergency service system is already suffering financially as we continue to protect our citizens. A move such as this would likely cripple emergency medical response to much of the state and cause additional financial hardship on every agency. Balancing OHA's budget should be solved by other methods.

We are more than willing to do our part as everyone is working to stretch budgets during these economic times. One source of revenue has already been agreed upon by stakeholders in recent changes to OAR 265-333-0030, where EMT re-licensure fees will incrementally increase in 2013 and 2015. Additional revenues of \$89,860 will be raised in 2013, and \$115,185 more coming in 2015, for a total of \$205,045 (assuming current levels of emergency responders for calculation). This would bring the total anticipated revenue from emergency responder licensure fees to \$846,615.

Other sources of funding should be explored. Possibilities include National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) funds that currently come into Oregon and nationally are intended to also support EMS system functions; innovative programs and partnerships created through Health System Transformation Team deliberations; grants from Federal "Field EMS Bill"; spreading out expense/fees to other OHA members, etc.

The EMS Section of Oregon Fire Chiefs Association offers to work collaboratively toward solutions to our system issues. Whether it is through a legislative work group or other avenue, we are here to serve and offer our expertise.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Stevens, President
EMS Section Oregon Fire Chiefs Association