



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Democrats Pass Bill Ensuring Press Access to Natural Disaster Sites

*House Bill 4087 ensures journalists have access to report at scenes of on-site
emergency zones*

SALEM, Ore. -- Today, House Democrats passed [House Bill 4087](#), which will ensure journalists have access to areas closed to the general public due to natural disasters, such as wildfires.

In past wildfire seasons, journalists in Oregon sometimes could [not access](#) on-site emergency zones, limiting their reporting ability, the sources they could interview, and photographs and videos they could take to document these events.

“As Oregon experiences more extreme weather conditions, we must make sure journalists can do their jobs and cover these important events,” said [Representative Karin Power](#) (D-Milwaukie), the bill’s chief sponsor. “This legislation reaffirms our commitment to a free press that can relay crucial information to the public.”

The bill also prioritizes reporter and first responder safety. It gives on-site scene commanders discretion to require news media representatives to have received approved fire and natural disaster site training and/or to carry appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Incident commanders will have the option to deny access. This a safety measure to ensure people are not put in harm’s way and emergency workers can do their jobs.

Once signed into law, Oregon will join states like California, where reporters have greater access to on-site emergencies.

The bill passed 48-4 and now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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