



Office of Senator Lew Frederick

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Oregon Senate Passes Bipartisan Bill to Support Rural Firefighters

Senate Bill 1068 will equitably increase funding for rural fire protection districts

SALEM, Ore - Today, a bipartisan coalition of Oregon Senators approved an initiative that will direct more support to rural firefighters. [Senate Bill 1068](#) will simplify how property owners not currently included in rural fire protection districts can join those districts to support firefighting efforts.

Specifically, the bill will allow property owners to consent to addition of their land to rural fire protection districts and authorizes the board of directors of a district to annex to the district, under certain circumstances, lands within the coverage area of the district. It closes a loophole that created pockets of land that were protected by a rural fire protection district but not paying for the service.

“This is a simple issue of fairness. It fixes a mistake in an old statute that has had devastating consequences. This bill helps Oregon’s rural fire protection districts get the funding they need and are supposed to receive so they can meet firefighter staffing and safety standards,” **said Senator Lew Frederick (D-Portland), who drafted the legislation and carried the bill.** “Our firefighters, who put their lives on the line to protect our communities, deserve our unwavering support and this legislation is an important step.”

SB 1068 had the support of firefighters across the state, who say it will improve the ability of rural fire protection districts in Oregon to respond to fire and other emergency situations.

“Senate Bill 1068 fortifies the role of our rural fire protection districts in effective wildfire suppression in Oregon’s remote residential areas,” **said one of the Chief Sponsors of the bill, Senator Jeff Golden (D-Ashland).** “The core idea is fair sharing of costs and responsibilities among the people protected by these rural fire protection districts and stabilizing their operating budgets over the long term. We can’t meet the challenge of the new normal of wildfire without them.”

Oregon Senate Democrats’ [2023 Oregon Works agenda](#) includes improving wildfire suppression efforts and early detection.

Senate Bill 1068 now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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