



PORTRLAND BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Senate Committee on Natural Resources

Oregon State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE, Hearing Room D
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 85

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM), I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 85.

The Portland Bureau of Emergency Management manages Portland's Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) program, which is a dedicated group of trained volunteers that are trained to respond when a disaster strikes. Whether facing a major earthquake, widespread medical emergency, or extreme weather event, these volunteers play a vital role in ensuring community safety and resilience. We know that in the critical moments after a disaster, neighbors are often the first, and sometimes the only, line of defense until emergency responders can arrive. The NET program empowers Portlanders with the skills and training to step in during these crucial hours, providing lifesaving assistance and stabilizing their communities in times of crisis.

Senate Bill 85 takes a critical step in strengthening Oregon's wildfire resilience by establishing the Neighborhood Protection Cooperative Grant Program, administered by the State Fire Marshal. This program will provide essential funding to local governments, fire districts, nonprofit organizations, and individual property owners, ensuring communities have the resources needed to mitigate wildfire risks and improve preparedness. Wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe, threatening lives, homes, and critical infrastructure across the state. These grants will build upon existing resilience efforts, equipping communities with the tools to reduce risk and respond effectively when disaster strikes.

Investing in community-led emergency preparedness is not just a strategy, it is a necessity. The strength of disaster response depends on ensuring that volunteers have the training, resources, and support needed to support their neighbors in a time of emergency. For these reasons, we urge your support of Senate Bill 85.

Sincerely,

Shad Ahmed
Director, Portland Bureau of Emergency Management