



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

January 21, 2022

MLAC Board and Administrator VanWinkle,

Good morning. For the record, my name is Karl Koenig and I am the President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council. The OSFFC represents over 3,700 career fire fighters and paramedics across the state of Oregon. I am here to introduce HB 4113 (LC 96).

HB 4113 would add gynecological cancers and bladder cancer to the list of presumptive cancers for fire fighters. Specifically, this bill would address cancers affecting reproductive organs, including the uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, cervix, vagina, or vulva. When ORS 656.802(5) was approved in 2008, the statute addressed male reproductive cancers, and this proposal brings protection parity for our approximately 275 female career fire fighters in contracting occupational cancer of the female reproductive system.

The recognition of the growing number of females in the career fire service is important. When we as a profession create a perceived double standard or cease to engage in modernizing our standards in protecting any class of worker we have failed. HB 4113 modernizes that by inclusively adopting the same protections for our female members in the case of an occupational cancer diagnosis. This proposal is consistent with MLAC mission and values as an important step in worker protections. To exclude occupational cancer experienced by women ignores the goal of Diversity, Equality and Inclusiveness in Oregon's career fire service.

Adding bladder cancer to the list of presumptive cancers is an evolution of occupational health and the fire service. While there are some who question the need for HB 4113, we experience cancers more and more frequently as compared to other professions. Since adopting the original presumption in 2008 the Oregon fire service increased its participation in occupational health standards such as NFPA 1582, the Standard for Comprehensive Medical Program for Fire Departments and is now the norm not the exception in Oregon. Improvements in our fire protective gear is a huge challenge and each of the major fire service advocacy groups are working with gear manufacturers to develop equipment that provides the proper amount of protection. Currently, 42 of 50 states list bladder or urinary tract cancers as part of their presumptive occupational cancer for fire fighters.



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Our mission at the OSFFC is to improve working conditions, safety, wages, retirement security and hours through political action and legislative change. HB 4113 is about equal treatment of all fire fighters and the applicability of bladder cancer in our current cancer presumption. We have 12 years claims experience with occupational cancer coverage for fire fighters. There has been no measurable increase in MOD rates, premiums, or the collapse of the Workers Compensation program, as a whole since enacting the 2008 law.

HB 4113 ensures the equal treatment of our workforce, and is supported through peer reviewed scientific data and comparative claim data. This bill would bring Oregon into line with standards throughout the nation with no measurable increase in workers compensation rates. This is an easy fix with far reaching impact.

This bill as written, includes those not covered under 656.802 as alternate plans as allowed in 656.027.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring HB 4113 to MLAC for consideration.

We urge a yes vote in committee.

Respectfully,

Karl Koenig s/s

Karl Koenig
President
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council