



June 24, 2022

Chair Landauer, members of the Legislative Subcommittee of the Public Records Advisory Council,

The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association appreciates the opportunity to weigh in on the proposed changes to ORS 192. Our members take our responsibility to operate transparently and comply with public records law seriously and understand the importance.

However, we do not believe the proposed changes to ORS 192 as presented is the correct approach to increasing access to public records. The proposed changes raise both budgetary and compliance concerns for our members in fire departments and districts across Oregon.

Complying with public records law is a challenge for many fire departments and districts, especially smaller or short-staffed agencies. It requires staff and time to meet requirements of Oregon Public Records law, which ultimately impacts budgets.

Charging a reasonable fee for these record requests has been a critical tool for our members to offset those costs, maintain adequate staff, and comply with public records requests. By eliminating our ability to charge that fee, we fear we will lose the ability to comply efficiently with our responsibility to provide these records and will be forced to divert funds that are for protecting our communities.

Staffing is already a challenge facing many of our members today and the proposed changes to ORS 192 has the potential to exacerbate that issue, create budgetary challenges, and make it more difficult for fire departments and districts to provide important public records when requested.

We ask that you not move forward with the proposed changes to ORS 192 and seek other solutions to making public records more accessible. We are ready to engage in those conversations and come up with a solution that does not jeopardize the already constrained budgets of fire departments and districts across Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chief Chris Heppel, Eugene Springfield Fire
1st Vice President, Oregon Fire Chiefs Association

25030 SW Parkway Ave. Suite 330
Wilsonville, OR 97070