



AURORA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

21390 Main Street NE • Aurora OR 97002

Station 503.678.5966 • Fax 503.678.1344

April 6, 2023

Dear Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

On behalf of the Aurora Fire District, I am writing to ask for your support in securing funding to complete a new fire station. This small investment would serve the citizens of Oregon for 40-plus years; therefore, we ask for your support for our capital project application.

Aurora Fire District provides first responder emergency services to the people of Aurora, Donald, and Butteville. Over 6000 people rely on our district to provide them with fire and medical protection. We cover Interstate 5, HWY 99, and a large portion of unincorporated Marion and Clackamas County.

A fire station is an excellent example of needed infrastructure and a project that would be very popular among taxpayers. We are in desperate need of a new fire station as our two current fire stations, one in Donald and one in Aurora, respectively built in the 1940's and 1950s. Both stations are inadequate for today's needs.

I have included some facts about the fire stations that I hope you will find helpful as you consider this request. Please keep in mind that we have two career firefighters on 24 hours a day.

- Neither fire station has sleeping quarters
- Neither fire station has a shower
- The fire stations do not have air conditioning
- Our exercise area is in the same garage where our fire engines are stored
- Neither fire station has a bathroom that meets ADA requirements
- Aurora Fire District has to rent a house in order to house our resident students
- Aurora Fire District has had to buy two homes near the fire station to house additional students and career staff. Not having our firefighters in the stations causes response delays

We have survived in these fire stations for over 70 years, and they have served us well. The time has long since passed when we needed a new fire station. In 2014, the fire district asked the voters to support our efforts in building a new fire station; unfortunately, it was denied. This bond request was during the recession that hit us all hard.

The Aurora Board of Directors has recently placed a levy for the May ballot. Due to first responder shortages, we are asking our voters to double their property taxes in order to hire firefighters. We

are concerned that our public simply cannot afford this levy and an additional bond for a fire station.

During the 2020 wildfires, the Aurora Fire District was an evacuation center for other displaced fire agencies. We had over 20 firefighters waiting for two bathrooms, and firefighters could not shower at our current facility, so they had to wait in line at our homes. We also had firefighters sleeping on the floor after fighting fires all day and night. The fire station was so full that there was no room for any public that may have needed a place to go during the fires. This request will take us across the finish line and allow us to construct this critical building.

This project is supported by the following;

- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Marion County Sheriff's Office
- City of Donald
- Woodburn Fire District

This request is consistent with the State of Oregon's efforts to prepare for and combat wildfire and other natural and man-made disasters. Every disaster response will involve a community fire station.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Fire Chief
Joshua L. Williams
Aurora Fire District



Board President
Bobby Meyer
Aurora Fire District