

January 24, 2025

To Ways and Means Committee members:

St. Charles Health System enthusiastically supports funding for the Jefferson County Fire and EMS capital project. The needs of the community and our fire and EMS personnel are not being met with the current building and we strongly support funding for a new structure.

As the Vice President Hospital Administrator of Madras and Prineville at St. Charles Health System, I see the impact of great fire and EMS staff on the health of our communities. Our hospital caregivers rely on emergency services staff members and collaborate daily with these hard-working teams. Currently, the building in Jefferson County is not meeting the needs of these staff members, as it is small and outdated.

The current building in Madras, which was built in 1989, was designed as a volunteer fire station and is not equipped for 10 full time shift staff members and lacks adequate bathroom, shower, and dorm space for female staff members (which make up about half of the fire/EMS staff). The fire station needs to resolve this issue to ensure privacy and equity for all its staff members. A lack of storage space in the building means that gear is inadequately stored, causing it to get dirty and need replacement more frequently.

Jefferson County Fire & EMS is a good community partner, with strong response times and providing 24/7 fire response to a rural community that has one of the highest poverty rates in the state. As a key stakeholder for this initiative, I support this project and believe it is in the best interests of Jefferson County residents and the Central Oregon community.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,



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