

Submitter: Casey Woodard
On Behalf Of: Woodard Family Foundation
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5531

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed rural fire station in the Dorena Lake area of Lane County, formally known as Row River Fire Response. I believe this project represents a critical investment in public safety for our vulnerable community and could serve as a valuable model for similar rural areas throughout the Pacific Northwest.

The Dorena Lake region faces unique challenges that make a dedicated fire station essential:

- The heavily forested terrain presents significant wildfire risks, particularly as climate change continues to create longer and more severe fire seasons
- Our remote location results in extended emergency response times from existing fire stations
- Many community members are economically disadvantaged, with limited resources to invest in private fire protection measures
- The area's rural character creates specific firefighting challenges that require specialized local knowledge and equipment

Beyond the obvious safety improvements, this fire station would provide numerous benefits:

1. Economic Revitalization: The construction and staffing of the facility would create jobs and stimulate our local economy
2. Insurance Cost Reduction: Improved fire protection typically leads to lower insurance premiums for homeowners and businesses
3. Community Resilience: The station could serve as an emergency shelter and coordination center during natural disasters
4. Volunteer Opportunities: A local fire station would provide meaningful volunteer roles for community members seeking to contribute and make a difference.

What makes this proposal particularly compelling is its potential as a replicable model across similar communities in the Pacific Northwest. By implementing:

- Cost-effective building design tailored to rural needs
- Innovative staffing approaches combining professional and volunteer firefighters
- Strategic equipment selection focused on wildland-urban interface challenges
- Regional coordination protocols with neighboring districts
- Integration with forest management initiatives

This station could demonstrate how rural communities can achieve adequate fire protection despite limited resources. The lessons learned and best practices developed could benefit countless similar communities throughout our region.

I strongly urge you to approve and prioritize funding for the Dorena Lake rural fire station project. This investment will not only protect lives and property in our community but could establish a valuable template for addressing rural fire protection challenges throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Thank you for your consideration of this important public safety initiative.

Sincerely,

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