

May 5, 2021

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and McLain, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

Thank you for listening to my testimony yesterday and for the thoughtful and investigative questions during the discussion of Senate Bill 605A. There were some comments raised and expressed concerning the current annexation processes and as to what properties would be annexed that I would like to expand on.

First off for the annexation process to be successful the properties being annexed would have to be willing to be annexed and the problem being faced is that they do not want to be annexed as they are already receiving the services or protection for free. If the process goes to an election the only people allowed to vote, under the current rules, are those that are not annexed in, so the vote is bound to fail and becomes a waste of time, money, and resources on all sides. If the laws allowed the current residents of the Fire Districts, or those that are paying for the non-residents to have service, to vote on these properties becoming part of the district the results would be different. All the current special district annexation laws and regulations are in favor of those that are not part of the Fire protection district.

Second, there were comments that this was just an attempt to expand a fire district's boundary or that fire districts would just build new stations to expand their boundaries. These are not the intents of this bill. This bill was intended to clean up the fire district boundaries and the islands created by the unprotected properties. The islands and existing boundaries that have been created by the current annexation and land use rules have created situations of uncertainty of who is in or out of a fire district which creates liability issues and concerns for the fire district, the dispatch centers, and even the counties who are ultimately responsible for the fire protection, fire code enforcement, and burning requirements, for unprotected properties. During an emergency nobody has the time to determine which house out of the 4 or 5 on the street is in or out. This bill would help eliminate the islands and help clean up the exterior boundaries so that there would be a clear line of what properties are in and which are out so that response packages can be sent through educated decisions, unlike currently where it is often discovered after the emergency if the property is in or out of the fire district. This does not mean that a fire district will never respond out of their area but can make the educated decision based on risk-benefit analysis. A district will likely send all their resources to a resident within the fire protection district but only limited resources out of the district with the goal of preventing uncontrolled fire spread versus complete extinguishment.

I have included some maps that might give some perspective of the challenges faced by fire districts that have been created by the current annexation and land-use rules. The first map you see is an overview of central Douglas County. The salmon color is Douglas County Fire District No. 2's current boundaries, Green is Winston Dillard, orange is Lookingglass Rural, purple is Glide Rural, magenta is Calapooia Rural, dark blue is Myrtle Creek, light blue is Oakland Rural, yellow is Kellogg Rural, and dark green is Fair Oaks rural. As you can see the outside boundaries are amoeba-like and there are many holes in the middle. Many of the holes were undeveloped land at one time and some still are, but if you look at the second map for the Douglas County Fire District No. 2 area the blue properties are now improved but were

never annexed into the fire district due to the loopholes in the current annexation process. The final four maps are closeups of a few neighborhoods to further show how the non-district properties can create confusion as to who is in or out. On those final four maps, the yellow properties are not in the fire district while the white/light gray properties are in.

Again, Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson, and McLain, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural resources, thank you for hearing testimony on Senate Bill 605A and I ask for your support on passing it. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions that I can help with.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Bullock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Robert Bullock

Fire Chief

Douglas County Fire District No. 2