

Testimony in Support of Infrastructure Project for Umpqua Fire Station

Honorable members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am here today to express our strong support for the proposed infrastructure project to add living quarters to Central Douglas Fire & Rescue's existing unstaffed fire station in Umpqua Oregon. This project would significantly enhance their ability to respond to emergencies, support their fire science and paramedic students, and improve services in a rural area that is currently underserved.

The Umpqua Fire Station, located in Umpqua, Oregon, was the site of a major conflagration fire in 2023 that was designated as the highest priority fire in the nation for nearly a week. This highlights the urgent need for improved infrastructure in the area. The existing station is currently equipped with apparatus bays and has access to essential utilities, including water, electricity, and propane. However, the addition of living quarters—comprising bedrooms, a kitchen, bathrooms, a laundry facility, a day room, and supply storage—will allow the Fire Authority to staff the station with volunteer and student personnel, dramatically improving their service to the area.

This addition would also benefit the Umpqua Community College Fire Science and Paramedic students by providing them with housing while they complete their education, giving them real-life experience in an active fire station environment. Furthermore, it would allow the Douglas Forest Protective Association to stage their wildland crews at the station during fire season, improving coordination and response times in this rural area.

Projects like these are crucial to all fire departments, especially those that were originally built during an all-volunteer era. Fire stations were not built with the thought of having someone living in them, or the thought of a student program. Having these sleeping quarters, kitchens etc. added to fire stations can greatly impact on the services we are able to provide, as well as trying to add capacity to a steadily declining volunteer workforce.

We respectfully request your support for this important infrastructure project.

Thank you.

Devin Loughridge

Fire Chief

Riddle Fire Protection District