

Submitter: Ed Pratt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB579

Honorable members of the Oregon Legislature

I am on the board of directors of Central Douglas Fire and Rescue, and a 40 year veteran of the fire service having served in positions from volunteer firefighter to Battalion Chief. I am writing today to express our support of the proposed infrastructure project to add living quarters to Umpqua station of Central Douglas Fire and Rescue. This station is currently an unmanned station with equipment and utilities but no personnel. When a call is received, off duty personnel who live in the area respond or personnel from another manned station respond. This makes for long response times. Our goal is to add living quarters and staff the station with UCC Fire Science and resident volunteer personnel. This will cut our response times significantly in the area, improve our overall manning, and improve Umpqua Community Colleges fire science program. This project has been planned with careful attention to usability sustainability, efficiency and economy. It is not intended to be a lavish facility but a practical and comfortable station that will improve our ability to serve the growing community.

Central Douglas Fire and Rescue has been a strong supporter of the UCC program that a few years ago was almost nonexistent, but now is becoming a very strong program. We currently utilize approximately 20 students that we assist with tuition and training. Our overall budget is very limited in discretionary spending thus building with out some outside assistance will be very difficult. This station, if built, will give some students a place to live and some real life experience in the fire service environment. While improving the lives of the community with improved fire and medical response to this growing area, it will also enhance our mutual aid to other departments in the area as we will be much closer when they request help. Douglas Forest Protective Association would also be able to use it as staging point for their wild land crews thus improving their response time to the area.

This area was the site of a major conflagration in 2023 that for several days was the designated as the highest priority fire the the country. It was started by lightning strikes and involved areas from Elkton to Umpqua. The station, the Umpqua community center, and a near by field were used as the living quarters and headquarters of the state fire response. Having this station as a complete facility would have made it easier to manage that fire.

Central Douglas Fire and Rescue is a combination department meaning we have payed and volunteer staff but most of our volunteer staff are students I am hoping that having a complete station will help increase our volunteer staff. It will give a point of contact for the community and a good selling point for volunteers. I respectfully

request your support for this infrastructure project.

Thank you

Ed Pratt
CDF&R Board member and community member.