



COMMISSIONER HEATHER BUCH, District 5, East Lane

PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING / 125 EAST 8TH AVENUE / EUGENE, OR 97401

May 8, 2025

Joint Subcommittee on Capital Constuction SB 5531 Relating to Lottery Bonds

Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse, and members of the committee,

Please note my wholehearted support for the Row River Rural Fire Protection District's (RRRFPD) \$1.1 million Capital Construction funding request to construct a much-needed fire station in rural Lane County. This investment is essential to strengthening emergency response, protecting lives and property, and enhancing wildfire resilience in an increasingly vulnerable region.

The RRRFPD, in my district of Lane County, was formally established in May 2024 with overwhelming community support. However, the district lacks a fire station, forcing firefighters to store essential equipment in barns and sheds which significantly delays response times. Without proper infrastructure, the district's ability to serve its residents, safeguard critical watersheds, and respond to emergencies—especially wildfires—is severely limited.

Lane County is at high risk for fire. The Row River region supplies 100% of the potable water for Cottage Grove, and contributes to the broader Willamette River watershed, which serves major Oregon cities. A fully operational fire station is critical to protecting this vital resource. Additionally, the scenic Row River Trail and Umpqua National Forest attracts over a million visitors annually, further underscoring the need for a strong, reliable fire response system to protect residents and visitors.

This funding is crucial to making this project a reality. The requested investment will allow the RRRFPD to construct a fire station to house emergency vehicles, provide training, and serve as a command center during crisis events. This project aligns with state priorities for rural development, disaster preparedness, and public safety, making it a worthy recipient of state funding support.

Please give this application full and fair consideration and help provide long term benefits by enhancing public safety and ensuring a stronger, more resilient emergency response network for our rural communities.

Sincerely,

Heather Buch
East Lane County Commissioner