



GRANTS PASS FIRE RESCUE

800 E Park Street Grants Pass, OR 97527

Memorandum

To: Co-Chairs Nosse & Girod, and Members of the Committee

Memo#:25-11

From: Fire Chief Jimmy Sanchez

Date: May 10, 2025

Re: Written Testimony in strong Support for SB 5531 – Capital Funding for Hillcrest Public Safety Station Renovation

My name is Jimmy Sanchez, and I proudly serve as the Fire Chief for the City of Grants Pass. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of our capital request for the interior renovation of the Hillcrest Public Safety Station.

The Hillcrest Station is more than just a building—it is a landmark of public service and community resilience. Since its construction in 1972, it has been a cornerstone of safety and coordination for Grants Pass and the surrounding region. Generations of residents still remember school field trips through its bays, community fire drills in its training yard, and moments of reassurance seeing its crews respond in times of crisis. It is a trusted, familiar institution that has served our city with pride for over five decades.

Today, however, that building is in urgent need of reinvestment. The aging infrastructure has fallen behind modern standards, both functionally and ethically. Water from faucets runs brown with rust, damaging uniforms, equipment, and undermining basic health standards. The building's outdated and overlapping layout hampers interdepartmental operations. There are no adequate or suitable facilities for all employees, particularly affecting women and underrepresented groups in the workforce.

A \$3.839 million investment will enable a complete interior renovation, modernizing the station, creating dedicated secure workspaces, and preparing Hillcrest to serve as a Continuity of Operations (COOP) center for 911 services in the event of regional emergencies. With completed design and cost planning through ZCS Engineering and DLR Group, this shovel-ready project is positioned to begin construction immediately and be completed within a year.

This renovation is not just about fixing a building; it's about honoring our public servants with the dignified, safe, and functional work environment they deserve. And it's about aligning our infrastructure with the values of equity and inclusion that Oregon has committed to as a state. As outlined in Oregon's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework for Public Buildings, all workplaces must support the full participation of a diverse workforce. This project achieves that



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by intentionally designing spaces that are accessible, gender-appropriate, and inclusive, ensuring no employee is left behind in our shared mission of public safety.

This proposal is also fiscally responsible. Renovating an existing structure avoids the higher cost of full replacement, extends the facility's life by 20–25 years, and reduces long-term maintenance. More importantly, it safeguards the continuity of regional emergency services that thousands rely on every day.

The City of Grants Pass is proud to serve as a regional hub for fire, police, dispatch, and emergency management services. Hillcrest has always served beyond its walls—supporting surrounding rural agencies, assisting state and federal partners, and responding to natural disasters from wildfires to floods.

On behalf of our firefighters, dispatchers, police officers, emergency managers, and the community that has relied on this station for over 50 years, I respectfully urge your support for this critical capital investment. Our people deserve to serve the public from a facility that reflects the safety, equity, and respect we promise to deliver to every Oregonian.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to the people of Oregon.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Sanchez

Fire Chief, City of Grants Pass