

Good afternoon Co-Chairs and members of the committee,

My name is Levi Eckhardt, and I serve as the Fire Chief of the Jefferson Fire District. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding a critical infrastructure need that impacts both public safety and emergency response capacity in our community.

Our fire station has been approved for a seismic upgrade — a vital step in ensuring that our emergency services remain operational in the event of a major earthquake. However, to fully realize the benefits of this upgrade, we are seeking funding support for a much needed retrofit that includes reconfiguring our apparatus bay.

The current station was originally constructed to accommodate a previous generation of fire apparatus. As a result, modern emergency vehicles do not fit properly within the existing structure. Specifically, we need to move one wall of the apparatus bay approximately six feet to allow for adequate clearance. At present, only two of our six bays can house standard-size apparatus; the remaining four are limited to smaller vehicles due to outdated dimensions.

This limitation reduces our operational flexibility and poses significant challenges in deploying equipment during emergencies. Addressing this issue through a retrofit alongside the seismic upgrade will enhance both the safety of our responders and the effectiveness of our service delivery.

I respectfully urge your support in securing funding for this retrofit. With your assistance, we can ensure that the Jefferson Fire Station remains a resilient and responsive asset for the community we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.