

**County Commissioners**

Colm Willis, Chair

Kevin Cameron

Danielle Bethell

**Chief Administrative Officer**

Jan Fritz

**MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

February 3, 2026

Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Capital Construction Subcommittee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Letter of Support – Mid-Willamette Valley Public Safety and Resilience Center (Keizer Fire District / Marion County Fire District #1 Joint Facility)**

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse, and Members of the Capital Construction Subcommittee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our strong support for the Keizer Fire District (KFD) and Marion County Fire District #1 (MCFD1) as they pursue state support for the Mid-Willamette Valley Public Safety and Resilience Center, a proposed joint public safety facility to be located near the northwest edge of the City of Keizer, adjacent to a large and geographically diverse unincorporated population in northwest Marion County.

This project represents an innovative, cost-effective, and high-impact approach to strengthening regional public safety. For the first time in Oregon, two adjoining fire districts are working collaboratively to plan and construct a jointly staffed, full-time, career firefighter facility designed from the ground up as a shared operational hub. This concept reflects responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars by consolidating infrastructure, strengthening mutual aid operations already occurring daily, and preparing the region for future growth and evolving emergency response demands.

**Operational Need and Growth Pressures**

North Keizer and northwest Marion County sit at the outer limits of current fire and law enforcement coverage. As population and housing growth continue in the north Keizer and Brooks area, call volume and service demand have increased significantly. Both fire districts have identified the need for additional station coverage in this shared geographic area to ensure the region can meet nationally recognized standards for emergency response.

NFPA standards call for an urban fire response within 4 minutes, yet current station locations, staffing pressures, and increasing call volume make these benchmarks difficult to meet. Delayed response times carry real consequences, more severe structure loss, higher injury risk, greater wildfire spread potential in WUI areas, and reduced survivability in medical emergencies.

The districts share a boundary and already provide mutual aid frequently. Rather than forcing taxpayers to support two separate facilities addressing the same geographic need, KFD and MCFD1 are pursuing a shared solution.

**A Regional Resilience Investment**

The Mid-Willamette Valley Public Safety and Resilience Center is envisioned as more than a fire station; it is a regional public safety and disaster response asset, supporting cooperative efforts from multiple agencies, including:

- Keizer Fire District
- Marion County Fire District #1
- Keizer Police Department

- Marion County Sheriff's Office
- Keizer Emergency Management
- Keizer Public Works

Planned elements include a multi-agency fire station, regional training capacity, dedicated space for multi-agency coordination, and a secondary / backup emergency operations hub.

### **Improved Response Capability and Modern Public Safety Tools**

A strategically located facility north of Keizer will enhance emergency response for both incorporated and unincorporated communities by:

- Improving response times for fire and EMS
- Supporting operations for specialized resources, including marine response assets for heavily used sections of the Willamette River
- Serving as a hub for modern response tools such as Drone as First Responder (DFR) capabilities that support rapid scene assessment for fires, vehicle crashes, water rescue incidents, and large-scale emergency events
- Strengthening regional readiness through training, interoperability, and integrated incident management
- This is particularly critical in a time when many local agencies rely heavily on temporary levies for staffing and operations and face limited permanent tax base capacity for major infrastructure investment.

### **Conclusion**

The Board of Commissioners views this proposal as a rare opportunity for the State of Oregon to support a high-return investment that improves public safety outcomes, strengthens mutual aid capacity, and builds lasting resilience in the Mid-Willamette Valley. The Mid-Willamette Valley Public Safety and Resilience Center will serve a broad region, potentially over 250,000 Oregonians, and provide scalable infrastructure for the increasing complexity of urban, suburban, and WUI response profiles.

We respectfully encourage the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee to support funding for this project and to prioritize this facility as a strategic public safety and resilience investment for the Mid-Willamette Valley and the State of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact our office if we can provide additional information or support.

Sincerely,

  
 Colm WUhs  
 Chair

Kevin Cameron  
 Commissioner

  
 Danielle Bethell  
 Commissioner