



Rodney Linz
Fire Chief

BANKS FIRE DISTRICT #13

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February 12, 2026

Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction SB 5702

Re: Support of Senate Bill 5702

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Banks Fire District, I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 5702 and to respectfully request inclusion of funding for a critical life-safety project at Hornshuh Creek Fire Station #14 on U.S. Highway 26.

SB 5702 provides essential capital construction investment authority that enables local districts like ours to complete infrastructure improvements that directly protect public safety. Our proposed project—the installation of an actuated, mast-arm-mounted overhead “wig wag” flashing beacon at Station 14—is a targeted, data-driven solution to a documented safety hazard affecting emergency response operations.

A significant portion of our emergency response demand is driven by traffic along U.S. Route 26, which runs directly past Station 14. As a primary corridor between the Portland metro area and the Oregon Coast, Highway 26 carries heavy commuter traffic, commercial vehicles, and seasonal travelers. Congestion frequently makes it difficult for fire apparatus to safely and quickly exit the station during 911 calls, directly impacting response times.

We also provide primary fire and rescue coverage for L. L. "Stub" Stewart State Park, which sees more than 92,000 visitors annually, as well as the adjacent Banks–Vernonia State Trail, which attracts approximately 250,000 visitors each year. These destinations significantly increase vehicle traffic, recreational activity, and emergency incidents in our response area, adding both seasonal and year-round demand.

Station 14 serves four rural communities along the Highway 26 corridor and responds to structure fires, motor vehicle crashes, wildland-urban interface incidents, and mutual aid requests. However, the station’s driveway access presents a documented safety concern. Due to the offset alignment between the apparatus bay doors and the highway access point, emergency vehicles must maneuver before entering the highway. This indirect configuration reduces sight distance and limits reaction time for motorists traveling at highway speeds—particularly during Code 3 responses when apparatus operate with lights and sirens.

Existing static warning signs do not provide adequate advance notice to drivers during emergency responses. To address this risk, the District proposes an actuated overhead flashing

beacon mounted on a mast arm over the highway. The “wig wag” system would provide high-visibility, early warning to approaching motorists before emergency apparatus enter the roadway. The beacon would activate only during emergency responses—not routine driveway use—preserving driver credibility and effectiveness. Activation would occur via push activation by responding crews and be extended through Opticom pre-emption emitters mounted on fire apparatus.

The District has received approval from Oregon Department of Transportation for this improvement. To secure that approval, Banks Fire District invested \$22,000 in feasibility and traffic pattern studies evaluating traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, roadway geometry, sight distance, and apparatus turning movements. Engineering analysis confirmed that an actuated overhead warning system is the most appropriate and effective safety countermeasure for this location.

The estimated cost of \$338,000 has been reduced to approximately \$173,000 through strong intergovernmental collaboration. We have secured a donated used mast arm pole and signal equipment, and Washington County has committed to maintaining the system on behalf of the District and ODOT. This partnership significantly reduces upfront costs while ensuring long-term sustainability.

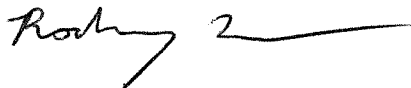
The District is seeking a \$173,000 grant to fund final signal design, Opticom emitters, construction, and associated permitting. Construction is planned for spring 2026, with completion anticipated by December 2026, contingent upon funding. The District has already demonstrated its commitment by funding required studies and leveraging partnerships to reduce total project costs by nearly half.

This project represents a practical, cost-effective investment in life safety. It will protect first responders, improve safety for the traveling public on U.S. 26, and ensure reliable emergency response to the rural communities that depend on Station #14.

We respectfully request your support of SB 5702 and inclusion of this \$173,000 capital construction investment so that this critical safety improvement can move forward.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney Linz", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Rodney Linz
Fire Chief
Banks Fire District