

Co-Chairs Nosse and Girod, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kathryn Henning, and I serve on the Board of Directors for Evans Valley Fire District #6. I am also a resident of Evans Valley, and I am writing in strong support of the District's request for \$2,200,000 in Capital Construction funding to complete the Evans Valley Community Resource Center. The total project cost is \$2.2 million, and the project is shovel-ready, with design and scope complete.

Evans Valley is an unincorporated rural community, and our needs are different from those of cities. Right now, we do not have a compliant, accessible indoor facility that can serve our entire community. There is no ADA-accessible public meeting space and no dedicated emergency coordination or resilience hub, even as our region faces increasing wildfire risk, smoke events, extreme heat, and severe weather.

When emergencies occur, residents naturally turn to the fire station because it is the only public facility in the valley. But the station was never designed to function as a community coordination center or gathering place. We have seen firsthand how difficult it is to support residents and coordinate response without appropriate space.

This project is infrastructure. On a daily basis, the Community Resource Center will support CPR and first aid training, preparedness education, community health programming, and space for regional healthcare and service partners. During emergencies, it will function as a wildfire coordination point, evacuation support location, and cooling or warming center, as well as a place for multi-agency staging and communications. This facility allows us to implement the state's investments in wildfire resilience, rural health equity, and emergency preparedness at the local level.

The need is especially clear when you consider our population. Approximately 46% of Evans Valley residents are age 65 or older, with a median age of 64.6. The median household income is \$17,083, far below both Medford and statewide averages, and 30.3% of residents live below the poverty level. Many of our neighbors cannot easily travel long distances to access services, making local infrastructure essential for both safety and equity.

This is also a fiscally responsible investment. The District has already secured \$1,799,400 in state seismic funding to rehabilitate the station, and this request completes a coordinated project that maximizes prior public investment, improves emergency response coordination, and reduces inefficiencies during disasters. This is a one-time capital investment that creates permanent rural infrastructure capacity.

The need is immediate. The design is complete. Local commitment is in place. \$2,200,000 completes the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Kathryn Henning*

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