

Submitter: Michelle Kaseberg
On Behalf Of: Blue Mountain Translator District
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or SB5701
Topic:

Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse and members of the committee. My name is Michelle Kaseberg. I am a Baker County Commissioner, the county's liaison to the Blue Mountain Translator District, and a paying member of this district.

I am here today to testify in strong support of funding for the Blue Mountain Translator District critical electric distribution line reconstruction project.

The existing transmission line was installed around 1959. After nearly 7 decades of service, it is failing. Tree root systems, weather events, and forest practices (or lack of) are disturbing the buried line. Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative has warned that this line is at serious risk of irreparable failure if it is not replaced soon.

This site provides the best radio coverage for Baker, Union, and Umatilla counties. The district is a non-profit, government municipality that is managed by an elected, volunteer Board of Directors and operates on a very slim budget. Yet the infrastructure it supports is vital.

This line powers communications for the Oregon State Police, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Public Broadcasting, and radio stations that function as emergency alert systems for first responders and the public.

This line terminates at 7100 feet of elevation on Mt. Fanny. It crosses both private land and US Forest Service land with portions buried along a steep mountain face. Access to the site from Cove takes approximately 90 minutes in summer conditions and becomes extremely difficult during winter months.

This request by Blue Mountain Translator District represents a long-term investment. The local electric cooperative has expressed a willingness to assume ongoing maintenance responsibilities if the line is reconstructed to current industry standards. This creates a sustainable long-term solution and reduces the likelihood of additional taxpayer request for maintenance.

This project is a rural critical emergency infrastructure request with significant public safety implications. I respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you for your time.