

Union County Emergency Services



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To: Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction

RE: Blue Mountain Translator District Capital Construction Request

Co-Chairs Sen. Girod, Rep. Nosse, and members of the Subcommittee,

As the Union County emergency manager and local public safety radio system manager, I am writing this letter to express my support of the Blue Mountain Translator District's (BMTD's) capital construction request for funding to replace the electrical service to the Mt. Fanny radio site in Union County. The electrical service to Mt. Fanny is owned by BMTD, and is at risk of irreparable failure if not replaced in the very near future.

Mt. Fanny is the best radio site in Union County from a perspective of areal coverage, and Union County is actively pursuing engineering studies with the intent of migrating radio equipment used by 21 public safety agencies to this location to resolve gaps in our system coverage. Union County's simulcast radio system requires continuously-running microwave data radios with electrical demands that exceed that which can be sustained by the solar systems we use at low use "stand-alone" sites servicing remote locations. A functioning commercial electrical service would be necessary for reliable system function at a primary site like Mt Fanny.

Also, Oregon Public Broadcasting is the primary entry point for commercial broadcast of emergency alerts in Oregon, and their TV and radio stations play a key role in dissemination of public alert and warning messages statewide. OPB and local broadcast radio stations, as a free service, play an important role in maintaining equity and availability in the dissemination of news and emergency messages. OPB and other commercial broadcast stations have infrastructure on Mt. Fanny that is reliant on uninterrupted commercial electrical service for sustained and reliable operation.

This request by BMTD also has a substantial sustainment value, as the local electrical cooperative has expressed a willingness to assume maintenance responsibilities for the line if it is reconstructed to current industry standards. This will mitigate the need to request taxpayer funding to support operation and maintenance of this electrical service in the future.

I encourage your support of BMTD's efforts and would be glad to answer any questions you have about the relevance of this request to public safety in Union County.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Vora
Emergency Manager
Union County, OR