



COMMISSIONER HEATHER BUCH, District 5, East Lane

PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING / 125 EAST 8TH AVENUE / EUGENE, OR 97401

February 13, 2026

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
RE SB 5701, Relating to State Financial Administration

Dear Chairs Girod and Nosse, and Members of the Committee:

I write in support of the Disston Fire Station capital construction request in SB 5701 for \$311,175.

In May 2024, voters in the Row River Valley approved the formation of a volunteer fire district to serve approximately 1,200 residents, 500 households, and an estimated 250,000 visitors each year. This rural valley faces significant wildfire risk and has only a single ingress and egress route, making timely emergency response critical for life safety and evacuation.

Currently, emergency response operations in the Disston area are housed in a temporary facility on private property. This arrangement is neither permanent nor purpose-built for fire and emergency medical services, it limits operational reliability and does not provide the stability necessary for long-term service delivery.

The proposed fire station will provide a secure, code-compliant facility to house apparatus and lifesaving equipment, which in turn, will improve response times in an area with limited emergency coverage. Additionally, it will support volunteer recruitment and retention by ensuring safe and functional operational space. This station will also strengthen wildfire preparedness and resilience in a watershed that is critical to Lane County and the broader region.

Importantly, this is a rural community that has already stepped forward to tax itself to establish the district. The funding request is not for ongoing operational support, but for a one-time capital investment to build durable public safety infrastructure.

A permanent station in Disston will move the district from a temporary and vulnerable footing to one that is stable, reliable, and capable of meeting the increasing wildfire and emergency response demands facing our rural communities.

I respectfully urge your support for this important funding request. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to rural public safety.

Sincerely,

Heather Buch, Vice Chair
Lane County Commissioner, District 5