

Testimony for SB 5534

Senator Gomberg

Esteemed committee

This William Ewing and I am the Manager for East Lincoln County Fire Rescue. I am testifying in support of funding the construction of a fire station in East Lincoln County. The district has been working on this project for over 14 years and has spent considerable time and money in the process which includes a shovel ready set of construction documents. This is not a spontaneous project but one we have been working diligently. The importance of this project cannot be done justice with mere words. I will summarize by saying this project is essential for protection of travelers on Highway 20 as well as all the local residences and farms. It will prove to be an essential base of operations during a major event west of Eddyville including large fires and the Cascadia earthquake. Below is a listing of some, but not all the perceived benefits.

Why a fire station in Eddyville

Daily benefit:

The Hwy 20 corridor between Toledo and the Lincoln county line is the only Hwy that does not have protection of sorts.

The district currently meets all response needs out of the Toledo Fire station

Historically we have had many very serious crashes on Hwy 20 in that gap mentioned above resulting in dozens of deaths and scores of serious injuries. Without intervention many more would have died trapped in their vehicles.

There is no emergency provision in all other capacities in that area of the county.

The station allows for the betterment of service provision by positioning equipment in that gap.

The station as designed would allow partnership with OSU for resident or student sleepers for staffing.

The station in the Eddyville area reduces insurance classification. The offset between the cost of the building and the insurance reduction leans favorably toward the property owner.

Major emergency benefit:

As proven with the 2020 wildfires local resources are the first line of defense in any emergency. This building and equipment stored in the building would allow for the immediate use of and equipment necessary as well as a staging point for incoming resources.

In the case of the Cascadia earthquake scenario this station would provide for a FOB for any and all assistance for the county as well as acting as a command post for all emergency providers responding to the incident.

The station would have communication capability even if we are reduced to HAM radios. This station would have phone, conventional radio, and ham radio capability.

The East Lincoln county fire rescue has worked at building a cache of emergency provisions such as water treatment and food supplies for that area that are currently housed in the Toledo Fire station. Both would be necessary in the Cascadia earthquake scenario.

After dealing with the 2020 fires I can personally say that this fire station would become a primary point of service in any major emergency such as wildland fires flooding and other weather events, including Cascadia.

The building we are currently using in at the old mill site and is very insufficient for these needs

Some ancillary benefits:

A station in Eddyville allows the district to consider servicing a greater area that is now in unprotected lands. This is a problem in the eastern fringes of Lincoln that are not currently within a fire district.

The District will partner with ODF and OSP and Lincoln County Sheriff's office, as a point of operations, for any kind of incident.

The District wishes to collaborate with OSU as a student residence resources known as a sleeper program. Where the student lives at the station and volunteers for the district while attend college.

For reference I have been in the fire service for 42 years 30 as a chief officer. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 541-270-1468. Will