

Board of County Commissioners

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13 November, 2017

West Fork Fire Station Act of 2017

Dear Honorable Senate and House of Representative Members:

The Dolores County Board of County Commissioners (DCBOCC) has been working diligently with the staff members of Senator Bennett and Representative Tipton, the US Forest Service, the Dolores Fire Protection District, and constituents from Dolores County to secure land for a fire station and the development of a fire department in the remote West Fork area of Dolores County. Dolores County, the citizens of the area, as well as surrounding emergency services providers, all recognize the immediate need for the fire station.

Historically, the Dolores Fire Protection District located in Montezuma County, has responded out of their service area to emergency calls in the West Fork area. The District firefighters as well as the tax payers of the Dolores Fire Protection District have shouldered the ever-increasing financial and logistic burden of those responses. While fire departments often provide service outside of district boundaries, they typically do so under the authority of a mutual aid agreement. The creation of a West Fork fire department and construction of a facility will allow for meaningful mutual aid in the area.

In addition to the benefits of meaningful mutual aid, the addition of the fire station will address insurability issues currently facing land owners in the area. Without local fire protection, some home owners are unable to secure insurance for their homes or even sell their property.

The DCBOCC has worked diligently with property owners and surrounding Fire Districts to procure necessary firefighting equipment. Additionally, surrounding fire districts have trained individuals living in the West Fork area to operate as firefighters. The West Fork Volunteer Fire Department, now with equipment and firefighters, need a fire station. With that need, the DCBOCC approached the Forest Service and their District Officer seeking a land conveyance to join the existing Road and Bridge Shop at Fish Creek in the West Fork area. The existing acreage at the site is not big enough to build a shop to house fire equipment and safely provide ingress and egress for emergency vehicles. The addition of the 4.43 acres of Forest Service land will provide the ability to build, improve the driveway for safety purposes, and clear up disputes the Forest Service has had over the years with existing mail boxes and driveway structures.

The West Fork Fire Station Act of 2017 will benefit the home owners of the West Fork by reducing response time from the Dolores Fire Station, which is 26 miles away, give the home

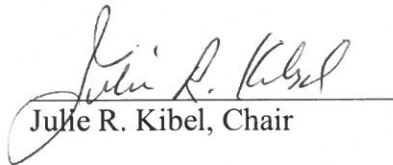
owners the ability to purchase fire insurance for their property and structures. Additionally, the facility will provide for a Forest Service staging area for response to forest fires, as well as equipment and trained fire fighters to be first responders in a very remote area. The structure to house equipment on site will benefit the citizens of West Fork, the Forest Service and surrounding fire districts.

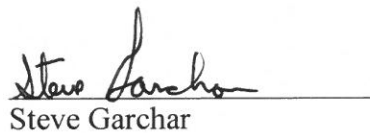
Due to a gracious donation from an individual connected with Dunton Hot Springs Area of \$100,000.00, the construction costs of the fire station will be met. Dolores County will provide in kind contributions of heavy equipment and operators to prepare the building site, as well as construction of a new driveway with culverts and signage. The County is further prepared to pay processing and transactions costs, as well as restrict the use of this land conveyance for a fire station, related infrastructure, and roads to facilitate access to and through the parcel.

We appreciate your support in this endeavor and kindly ask that you will pass the "West Fork Fire Station Act of 2017" to make this planning become a reality.

Sincerely,

DOLORES COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Julie R. Kibel, Chair


Steve Garchar


Floyd Cook