

Ways and Means Committee

Public Hearing Testimony

(4-23-2009)

Committee Members I appreciate you letting me address you today.

My name is Daniel Woodson and I am the Fire Chief of Lebanon Fire District.

Emergency services are dependant on a reliable interoperable communication system. We currently have a splintered system with a limited ability to talk to other agencies in a major event. In the fire service, radio communications can literally mean the difference between life and death.

The Oregon Wireless Interoperable Network (OWIN) would give us that capability. We are all required to meet new FCC standards by 2013. The OWIN project will help all agencies reach those requirements by that deadline.

The OWIN system being developed in Southwest Oregon will dovetail with the system being set up in Linn and Benton Counties. OWIN is our path to true interoperability. Linn County has signed on as a supporter of the goals of the OWIN project. Along with us, there are many other partnerships already in place and others are forming. If the funding for this project is cut those partnerships may dissolve. The FCC requirements may force many to move forward with other projects to meet those mandates, causing the loss of many critical partners key to the success of the OWIN project.

On our Eastern side, we have had two large forest fires in the last four years. Fire and law enforcement personnel had to borrow radios to be able to communicate with other agencies involved in those emergencies. OWIN could have improved that communication and made it easier and safer for those emergency responders involved.

We ask for your help to keep this project on schedule and moving forward.

Thank You.