

CROMWELL-WRIGHT

AREA FIRE DISTRICT

Station 1
5592 Highway 210
Cromwell, MN 55726
218-644-3547



Station 2
1426 3rd Street
Wright, MN 55798
218-357-2332

Date May 4, 2019

Cromwell Wright Area Fire District
5592 Hwy 2292
P.O. Box 35
Cromwell, MN 55726

RE: Omnibus tax bills HF2125/SF5

Dear Minnesota State Legislators,

For the last eight years, local governments and the two city fire services have been working HARD on forming a taxing fire district in Carlton County

These different local government bodies are totally in support and approve of the fire taxing district bill. They are the Cities of Cromwell and Wright, Beseman Township, Eagle Township, Haugen Township and Lakeview Township, and unorganized Townships of Corona, Progress and Red Clove which are represented by Carlton County Commissioner Gary Peterson, who has also been very supportive during this process.

The demographics of this rural area of Minnesota includes a large elderly low income population, a high percentage of tax exempt properties, and a portion of the Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation. The City of Wright is a small city with no infrastructure, and the city's state aid has been decreasing each year due to this reason.

As it stands now, once fire contract funds are in a city's general account, it would be possible for a city to use these funds on any of its multiple needs, such as roads, utilities, etc., and not necessarily be designated for fire protection. This is why the townships are pursuing a fire tax district - to ensure their contract fire dollars are spent on fire protection. Thirty years ago, for example, the Moose Lake Volunteer Fire Department became a Fire Tax District because the city spent the fire truck fund savings on other needs.

Currently, each city has control and oversight over fire funds (two fiscal agents) and our Joint Powers District has no control of its funds. We could change to a different type of Joint Powers Agreement that includes control over funding, but in that case the state mandates that the Joint Powers Board would have to have a special annual audit at an additional cost of \$6,000.00 each year. The Joint Powers Board feels this type of audit would be grossly expensive for our small annual budget, which is between \$80,000.00 to \$90,000.00. Our service area is a rural, low income area of Minnesota with limited funds, and we need to be financially responsible.

Please support rural local government by supporting the bill HF 2125.
Feel free in contacting any or all of these following government officials.

Respectfully From The Following:

John Manninen
Beseman Township Board Member
Fire Joint Powers Board Member C) 218 380 3334

Mayor Sharon Zelazny, City of Cromwell
Fire Joint Powers Board Member
mayorofcromwell@frontier.com Cell) 218 390 9925

Loren Shelton
Eagle Township Board Member
Fire Joint Powers Board Member
loransshelton@hotmail.com cell) 218 644 3759

Tammy Onstad
Haugen Township Board member
Fire Joints Powers Board Member
colorbydesign_wow@yahoo.com Cell) 218 355 8878

Steve Risacher
Lakeview Township Board Member
Chairperson, Fire Joint Powers Board Member
sjrisacher@gmail.com cell) 218 349 9758

Jerri Haugan
City Council Board Member, City of Wright
Fire Joint Powers Board Member
Irichards@cromwellwright.k12.mn.us Cell) 218 390 9500

Carlton County Commissioner Gary Peterson
Joint Powers Board Member
gary.peterson@co.carlton.mn.us Cell) 218 380 4949
representing unorganized Townships of Corona, Progress, and Red Clover

Lucas Goodin
Fire Chief, Cromwell Wright Fire District
smokeeater4605@hotmail.com Cell) 218 390 1305

Mike Peterson
Asst. Fire Chief and Combining Service Coordinator
Cromwell Wright Fire District
cmpcando@yahoo.com Cell) 218 390 1175