



Statement for the Record
Dan Meyer, Vice President of Sales, Pierce Manufacturing, Inc.
U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia & Census
September 10, 2025

Chairman Hawley, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Pierce Manufacturing's efforts to serve and support our nation's fire departments and firefighters. My name is Dan Meyer, and I am the Vice President of Sales at Pierce Manufacturing ("Pierce"). I am grateful for the Subcommittee's leadership on the important issues impacting the fire truck manufacturing industry, and I look forward to speaking with you about Pierce's mission of delivering high-quality, innovative fire trucks that help firefighters protect and serve their communities and return home safely.

I have spent essentially my entire professional life at Pierce because I believe in our mission, and I'm proud to work at a company that supports the community I'm from. I was born and raised in Appleton, Wisconsin, where Pierce started over a century ago and continues to operate today. Pierce proudly builds American-made fire trucks manufactured by over 3,000 craftsmen, welders, and engineers across 10 principal facilities in Wisconsin, Florida, and Tennessee. Our story is uniquely American. We started in 1913 as a father-and-son shop building truck bodies on Model T Ford chassis in an old, converted church at the corner of Fremont and Jefferson Streets in Appleton, Wisconsin, where we remain headquartered. The firefighters we serve are represented in our workforce, and I have the pleasure of working alongside more than 100 active and former firefighters, as well as other first responders, at Pierce. Together, our team creates highly customized, carefully designed and engineered pumpers, aerials, tankers, and rescue units.

I started at Pierce nearly 15 years ago, beginning in marketing and expanding into roles in dealer development, sales operations, government sales, and regional sales coverage, and now oversee more than 300 people as the leader of our dedicated nationwide sales team. To me, the work we do at Pierce is not just a job, it's a calling; one that is deeply meaningful to me and my family. Firefighters risk their lives to protect our communities, and they deserve fire trucks that allow them to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Pierce is an Oshkosh Corporation ("Oshkosh") business, a Wisconsin-based manufacturer that employs 15,000 people across 25 U.S. manufacturing facilities with our keystone Wisconsin locations and various sites located throughout Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah. Oshkosh is an industrial technology company focused on innovating purpose-built vehicles and equipment with a rich history and tradition of growing and keeping manufacturing jobs here in America. We empower everyday heroes with our vehicles and equipment, and at the heart of what we do is our American manufacturing might.

Pierce sells our fire trucks through a national network of independent dealers, and I lead our engagement with this dedicated dealer network. These dealers are generally the primary point of contact for the firefighter customer from the initial design of the fire truck through its final delivery. Due to the custom nature of the majority of Pierce trucks, customers work closely with

dealers to customize their Pierce fire truck and place orders, which are immediately integrated into Pierce's master production plan.

Fire trucks are mission-driven vehicles. Different departments request different specifications based on the unique needs of the communities they serve. For example, rural departments often use 2,000+ gallon water tankers to serve areas without hydrants, while fire departments in cities have trucks with powerful pumps and 100+ foot aerial ladders for tall residential and commercial buildings. Budget and staffing-constrained departments may want multi-purpose trucks that combine pumping, rescue, and medical capabilities on one apparatus. Pierce is the best-in-class, in no small part because of our ability to customize trucks to meet the needs of individual fire departments.

I recognize the Subcommittee remains interested in issues facing the fire apparatus industry. As laid out in a letter to REV Group, Inc., Oshkosh Corporation, and Rosenbauer America on April 3, 2025; in conversations with Subcommittee staff; and in an invitation to participate in today's hearing, I understand the Subcommittee is interested in addressing: (1) reports of consolidation in the fire truck industry, (2) increased lead times, (3) pricing, (4) repairs, and (5) federal support for firefighter equipment. I will address each of those topics in turn.

First, with regard to industry consolidation, neither Oshkosh nor Pierce has acquired any other U.S.-based fire truck manufacturer. We compete with dozens of other fire truck manufacturers wherever we sell our trucks. Our growth has been organic, driven by innovation.

In our efforts to build the most specialized trucks, maintain a strong dealer network, and serve our important customers, we have made investments over many years to expand our own manufacturing capabilities to meet rising market demand. That is and will remain our priority. Pierce has been making significant investments in innovation and manufacturing capacity to succeed in a highly competitive market. Pierce's steady, organic growth reflects our long history of delivering best-in-class products tailored to meet the individual needs of America's firefighters.

Further, the only acquisition of any North American fire truck manufacturing company since Oshkosh acquired Pierce in 1996 occurred in 2022, with the acquisition of the Canadian company MaxiMetal to better address the Canadian fire market. MaxiMetal sells an average of fewer than five trucks per year into the U.S. and comprises far less than 1% of our total U.S. fire truck revenue.

Second, Pierce shares the Subcommittee's concern about long lead times for production across the fire truck industry, and we are working tirelessly to reduce those lead times – including by continuing to make historic investments to increase throughput. We are laser-focused on reducing lead times on our custom trucks to 12 to 18 months, in line with our pre-pandemic norms.

Various disruptions that followed in the wake of the pandemic include significant supply constraints and associated cost escalation, labor shortages, and an unprecedented increase in demand, contributing to extended lead times across the fire apparatus industry. Prior to the pandemic, demand in the fire truck industry was fairly steady, with approximately 4,000 fire truck orders per year in the U.S. across all manufacturers from 2013 through 2019. Of these orders, Pierce received, on average, 1,470 orders per year. During that timeframe, Pierce operated with a lead time of around 12 to 18 months to produce customized fire trucks. From 2020 through 2023,

however, the fire truck industry faced several critical challenges that contributed to increased lead times. Following the Great Recession, in the 2010 to 2019 timeframe, the average number of fire trucks purchased by fire departments in the U.S. decreased relative to the prior decade, leading to aging fleets. After the pandemic, the combination of aged fleets, CARES Act funding, and increased property tax revenues for municipalities caused demand for fire trucks to skyrocket. In 2022, the fire truck industry experienced a 45% increase in demand overall compared to pre-pandemic averages, and Pierce itself saw a 64% spike in demand compared to 2019 – the calendar year prior to the pandemic. While demand was rising, there were significant issues acquiring skilled labor, and global supply chains faced severe challenges. Shortages of core components – such as computer chips and axles – disrupted fire truck production. These factors resulted in extended delivery times across the fire truck industry, along with many others. In response, Pierce invested heavily in manufacturing capacity and throughput.

Pierce is continuing to take numerous actions to decrease lead times. Since lead times began to extend in 2022, we have invested approximately \$50 million to increase throughput, and we have planned another \$100 million to continue expanding capacity. To date, we have:

- Grown our workforce by more than 25% in less than three years, adding nearly 800 American jobs since the end of 2022;
- Expanded our manufacturing space by 28% since 2022, adding nearly 500,000 square feet to bring our total manufacturing footprint to more than two million square feet in the U.S. This includes a new production facility in Murfreesboro, Tennessee with more than 100 employees dedicated to fabricating and welding Pierce fire truck cabs;
- Invested in cutting-edge equipment like AI-enabled sanding systems, paint robots, and a new 30-kw laser cutting machine; and
- Established a task force dedicated to finding new ways to improve manufacturing efficiency and throughput.

We know customers want and deserve shorter lead times, and the manufacturers who can accomplish that will win their business. Pierce is determined to meet our customers' needs, which is why our company is committed to investing in our people and our manufacturing capabilities to reduce lead times and best serve the firefighter community.

Understanding the need for faster delivery options, we are also building stock fire trucks, which are built to standard specifications and are available for immediate delivery to fire departments today. Pierce also offers trucks with fewer customization options that allow for faster delivery than a fully customized build-to-order truck. These less complex fire trucks are assembled in dedicated production lines to maximize throughput and reduce lead times.

While we offer these stock-unit trucks and other less customized apparatuses, the majority of our customers continue to request customized, build-to-order fire trucks. Our customers tailor their vehicles to best address particular factors, including the various types of roads, terrain, traffic density, water supply, buildings, the presence of hazardous materials, and many other variables their firefighters will encounter. Considering these many variables, we provide firefighters with

the ability to design fire trucks tailored to meet their precise requests. Firefighters are most familiar with the unique characteristics of their communities and are best suited to equip a truck tailored to serve those communities. Our customers request high levels of customization from Pierce, and we offer them more than 100,000 customization options in an effort to meet their precise needs. This level of customization requires a complex and time-consuming production process. Depending on which options a customer chooses, production for a single fire truck can take up to 7,000 hours, with an average of approximately 2,000 hours. Building a single, custom fire truck involves the labor of hundreds of Pierce workers throughout the process.

When a customer places an order, Pierce, through our dealer, provides the customer with an estimated lead time. While the dealer is the primary point of contact for the customer, the customer has several touchpoints directly with Pierce during the manufacturing process. Pierce works closely with our customers to address any questions or feedback they may have throughout the production process. Before production begins, the customer is invited to visit the Pierce manufacturing facility with their dealer to review the initial details of their truck design with our Pierce order management and engineering team members. Customers may also visit the factory for a mid-construction review, allowing Pierce to make any requested changes to the truck design. After the truck is built, the customer will visit the factory for a final inspection to verify that the custom truck meets their specifications prior to shipment. When customers request changes to the truck specifications throughout the manufacturing process, the delivery schedule may be affected. However, this process enables Pierce to deliver a truck built to meet each customer's precise requests, which may evolve even after an order has been placed.

Third, we are dedicated to supporting a network of Pierce dealers operating through over 120 service centers across the country. Our customers come back to Pierce time and again because they trust our apparatus. That means they need to be satisfied with the trucks they buy – at the time of purchase and throughout the lifecycle of the product. We are dedicated to supporting excellent aftermarket service; we owe it to our customers and the communities they serve. The success of our business depends on it.

Pierce is focused on ensuring fire departments have the resources they need. We operate a 120,000 square foot warehouse uniquely dedicated to our spare parts inventory, we provide technical training to department mechanics, and we offer 24/7 technical support. In most instances when repairs are needed, Pierce delivers parts immediately or provides next-day delivery. We are working towards the ambitious goal of 95% same or next day delivery. Additionally, the Pierce leadership team is made aware of out of service trucks daily and demands visibility into high-priority repairs.

Customers also have a wide range of options when servicing their Pierce trucks and are not confined to using Pierce dealers. Customers are free to choose their preferred mechanics, and many larger departments operate their own repair yards given the size of their truck fleets. Departments can obtain approximately 90% of the parts they need from general suppliers. No matter how a customer chooses to service their vehicle, Pierce does everything we can to ensure their trucks stay operational.

Fourth, Pierce has always been committed to being fair, honest, and transparent about customer costs. That commitment continues to this day and will never waver.

At Pierce, it is in our business interest and in the interest of our customers to provide certainty in our pricing. We believe it is best for our customers to know truck prices upfront – allowing them to make informed decisions that best suit the needs of their communities. The price at the time of the order is designed to account for input costs such as materials and labor throughout the production timeline. When a customer requests customization changes after an order is placed that will increase or decrease costs, we inform them before work begins so that they can make a fully informed decision. We prioritize communication and transparency in our pricing and, even when we face uncertainty, we make extraordinary efforts to create certainty for our customers.

Pierce considers pricing for future orders quarterly and takes into account various factors when adjusting prices, including costs for raw materials, parts, labor, and overhead. Before Pierce adjusts prices, we provide 60 days' notice to dealers so that customers can purchase fire trucks before the adjustment takes effect.

As previously stated, prior to the pandemic, demand in the fire truck industry was fairly steady, and Pierce operated with a lead time of around 12 to 18 months to produce custom fire trucks. Partly due to the relatively short lead times, prices during that time included projected input costs for approximately one year in advance. Demand in the fire truck industry increased to historic levels coming out of the pandemic. We saw global supply challenges and significant inflation that impacted both lead times and prices. When there is a longer lead time to produce fire trucks, the price at the time of ordering must factor in cost increases over that longer period. As supply chains were strained and costs increased during the pandemic, our customers took a hit, and we did too. Now, the rate of price increases has slowed significantly as inflation has leveled, and demand and lead times have begun to normalize.

I would like to reiterate Pierce's appreciation for the Subcommittee's commitment to addressing issues that impact the fire truck manufacturing industry and the firefighters who serve our communities. Through ongoing innovation, hiring, and reinvestment in our manufacturing business, we are working relentlessly to increase capacity and support the needs of individual fire departments across the country.

Finally, I appreciate the Subcommittee seeking to identify opportunities for Congress and the federal government to support the fire industry, including support for additional firefighting equipment. In response to the Subcommittee's inquiry, my colleagues and I at Pierce have considered the question of what changes to federal law or policy might help expedite the movement of fire trucks from order to the fire station. One possibility we have identified, as shared previously with the Subcommittee, is implementing a Defense Priorities & Allocations System (DPAS) rating for the fire truck manufacturing industry. DPAS ratings give priority designations to contracts and orders for emergency preparedness. Implementing a DPAS rating for the fire truck industry could help reduce delays across the industry that are exacerbated by ongoing supply chain issues. While it would not solve the issue on its own, we understand DPAS has been a helpful tool for the defense industry, which deals with similar challenges in some product lines. I look forward to discussing this and other possible solutions with the Subcommittee.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee again for investing time in this critical issue and for the opportunity to participate in this hearing. Working at Pierce is more than a job; it is my privilege, and I'm proud to represent our team before you today.