



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC SERVICES BUILDING
205 I KAEN ROAD | OREGON CITY, OR 97045

May 2, 2013

Rep. Jennifer Williamson & Sen. Jackie Winters, Co-Chairs
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178
Salem, OR 97301

RE: County Law Library Funding

Dear Co-Chairs Williamson and Winters:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 5016, which appropriates funds for the operation of county law libraries. We support the funding request in HB 5016, Section 8, and request that all funds be appropriated directly to county law libraries.

The Oregon Library Association (OLA) is circulating a proposal to redirect a percentage of the appropriation for county law libraries to the State Law Librarian to fund electronic resources. We support centralized funding of online legal research databases and efforts to improve access to legal information statewide. However, we believe that the OLA proposal is flawed and needs more work.

Redirecting a percentage of county funding to the State to run a statewide program should only be considered after a thorough assessment of both the legal information needs of our residents and the program being proposed. The OLA Task Force on Legal Information met for a total of six hours and did not reach a consensus on the Final Report that forms the basis of the proposal in question.

25 counties provide access to online legal research databases through subscriptions with legal publishing vendors. The majority of these contracts are for Westlaw or Lexis. Previous attempts to secure better statewide access for all county law libraries to these key databases failed. In addition, the OLA proposal does not provide details on what databases and "electronic resources" will be funded, and therefore it remains unknown whether they are wanted or needed by counties. Counties have already been working collaboratively to purchase access to online legal research databases and reduce costs. The OLA Proposal would have an effect on these efforts.

While we are in favor of the underlying principles and motivation of the OLA's proposal, we believe it should be further studied, discussed and developed before it moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Jared Anderson (janderson@clackamas.us), Government Affairs Specialist, if you have questions on this letter.

Sincerely,

John Ludlow, Chair
On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners