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MEASURE: HB 4143
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House Committee on Judiciary

House Bill 4143

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

House Bill 4143 brings Oregon in line with 48 other states in regard to the disposition of excess funds of class action judgments and settlements. While the State Treasury may not have much of a nexus to the question of how judgments and settlements are constructed, this concept would – in large part – direct such funds into the state’s Rainy Day Fund and will have the effect of strengthening the state’s reserves. For this reason, I’m pleased to endorse the passage House Bill 4143.

In evaluating where these funds can be directed so as to best benefit the public, I believe the Rainy Day Fund is among the more appropriate destinations. The Rainy Day Fund is meant to be used during economic downturns to stabilize funding for critical services, so all Oregonians can benefit from funds placed there. Further, because these funds may come at irregular and unpredictable intervals, I feel that it is more prudent to designate the proceeds as reserves rather than for ongoing operations.

While not large enough to change the state’s credit rating entirely on its own, this measure will add to the prudent setting aside of reserves that contributes to Oregon’s overall fiscal health and financial reputation.

Thank you.

State Treasurer Ted Wheeler