

Jefferson County Circuit Court
75 SE "C" Street, Suite C
Madras, OR 97741-1794
www.courts.oregon.gov/Jefferson
541.475.3317
Reply to ()



Crook County Circuit Court
300 NE Third Street
Prineville, OR 97754-1990
www.courts.oregon.gov/Crook
541.447.6541
Reply to ()

Annette C. Hillman
Circuit Court Judge

Daniel J. Ahern
Presiding Judge

Gary Lee Williams
Circuit Court Judge

Twenty-Second Judicial District

April 29, 2015

Co-Chair Tobias Read and Co-Chair Fred Girod
Joint Subcommittee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Read and Girod:

We are writing this letter in support of Jefferson County's request for an additional \$2.5 million to construct a new courthouse. We are the three Circuit Court Judges who serve the 22nd Judicial District. We all regularly work in the current Jefferson County Courthouse. It is our belief that the new courthouse the County is building will meet the needs of the court system, and more importantly the community, for many years to come.

In addition to the significant structural and seismic defects of the current courthouse, which pose a threat to human health and safety, the current facility does not have sufficient space. When the current courthouse was opened in 1963 there was not an assigned Judge to sit in the County. Instead we were part of a much larger circuit of counties and a Judge would come to our courthouse two to three times a month to hear cases. Unfortunately, the current courthouse was designed with that limited court need and we only have one jury courtroom. Since 1996 we have had three Judges working our two county District. The 1963 courthouse simply doesn't meet our 2015 needs.

The public that accesses the Court will be the major beneficiary of your support. By having multiple courtrooms equipped for jury trials cases will be processed faster. The design of the courthouse will allow for separation of prisoners from the public. There will be space available for attorneys to meet with their clients in private before entering the courtrooms. In short, the courthouse design is intended to make the often intimidating appearance in court less intimidating.

Jefferson County is not a wealthy County. For our Commissioners to commit to spending \$8,900,000 with the expectation that the State would contribute \$6,500,000 under the formula outlined in SB 5506 section 9 (b)(A) from the 2013 session, shows an incredible commitment on their part to the court system. We hope that the State will show their commitment to this needed project by allocating the balance of \$2,500,000 to meet the 50% match.

Thank you for your consideration to this request.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Ahern
Presiding Circuit Court Judge

Sincerely,

Gary L. Williams
Circuit Court Judge

Sincerely,

Annette C. Hillman
Circuit Court Judge

