

I am writing in response to the HB 4130 proposal regarding a change in public records requests and fulfillment. I am a public records custodian for a small rural city with a population under 1,000. It has always been one of the functions of my office to provide complete and timely response to records requests, as governmental transparency and access to documents by the public are very important factors for a successful and motivated local government. I suspect most other local government agencies agree that our primary focus is to serve the best interests of the public, which includes responding to its needs appropriately.

I agree with the position of the Oregon Municipal Recorder's Association that HB 4130 should be postponed until a complete analysis can be made of the current system and appropriate changes recommended by the task force. Unnecessarily placing hard deadlines on records requests may negatively affect smaller organizations like mine that have a combined system of paper and electronic records due to mismanagement of records by our predecessors and a lack of staff or funding for records management updates, making ours a painstakingly slow process of transferring paper to electronic copy. Additionally, there are rare occasions when I am away from the office for an extended period of time, which may affect my ability to respond quickly to records requests due to being the only staff member available for such tasks. This issue appears to be common in small organizations with only one or very few records management staff on hand.

In the interests of best serving our communities while not running the risk of violating the letter or spirit of the public records laws, I would ask that HB 4130's passage be postponed until sufficient information can be gathered as to its effects on smaller local government organizations.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to following the progress of the bill and learning more about its implications for our communities.

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