

# JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

## Board of Commissioners

Rick Dyer (541) 774-6118  
Bob Strosser (541) 774-6119  
Colleen Roberts (541) 774-6117  
Fax: (541) 774-6705

10 South Oakdale, Room 214  
Medford, Oregon 97501  
[www.jacksoncounty.org](http://www.jacksoncounty.org)

March 27, 2019

Representative Jennifer Williamson, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE, H-295  
Salem OR 97301

RE: House Bill 3360

Dear Chair Williamson:

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners wishes to express support for House Bill (HB) 3360, which provides that bonds may be issued under Article XI-Q of the Oregon Constitution if the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court determines that remodeling, renovation, or expansion of court facilities is necessary or desirable.

We are optimistic that Jackson County will receive approval for an additional Circuit Court Judge through HB 2239, which recently moved from the House Committee on Judiciary to the Joint Ways and Means Committee. The Jackson County Justice Building, built in 1979, was designed for sole use by the courts with six courtrooms. It was expanded in 2002 to add an additional courtroom. Currently, the building has seven courtrooms with the addition of one office space converted to a Hearings Referee courtroom. All of the current courtrooms are at capacity with nine judges. Additional judges are needed; however, challenges to scheduling and space would be significant with any additions.

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) completed a judicial workload study on Oregon's Circuit Courts in 2015. The workload study included judges and referees from 16 of the 36 Circuit Courts. The final workload study was released in 2016 and concluded that Oregon Circuit Courts are significantly under resourced, even more so when the juvenile dependency "best practices" case weight is considered. The study reported that adequate resources are essential if the Oregon Circuit Courts are to process and manage court cases in a timely and effective manner. The workload study assessed the number of judicial officers needed to handle the court's caseload and identified courts where additional judicial resources were most needed.

The NCSC recommended that the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) continually advocate for the statutory judicial positions and that other judicial resources are needed to ensure that each district has sufficient resources to process its caseload timely and effectively. The final workload assessment model indicated that Jackson County had the greatest need for additional, statutorily authorized, judicial positions with a total of seven additional positions.

The County has a great need for additional courtrooms. We are seeking State assistance to help fund a plan to accommodate immediate and future needs; however, this project does not meet the current criteria to use State bond funds. If passed, HB 3360 will address this challenge and ensure that Jackson County's Circuit Court can operate and continue to operate effectively.

Chair Williamson  
March 27, 2019  
Page 1 of 2

Thank you for considering Jackson County's position on HB 3360. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Harvey Bragg, Senior Deputy County Administrator, by phone 541-774-6035 or email at harvey.bragg@jacksoncounty.org.

Sincerely,

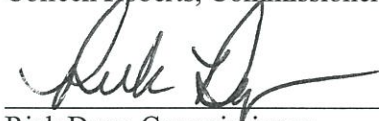
JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Bob Strosser, Chair



Colleen Roberts, Commissioner



Rick Dyer, Commissioner

jd:lf

cc: Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
Senator Cliff Bentz, District 30, Ontario  
Senator Tim Knopp, District 27, Bend  
Senator Dennis Linthicum, District 28, Klamath Falls  
State Representative Daniel Bonham, District 59, The Dalles  
State Representative Cheri Helt, District 54, Bend  
State Representative Mike McLane, District 55, Powell Butte  
State Representative Jack Zika, District 53, Redmond  
Patrick Sieng, Legislative Affairs Manager, Association of Oregon Counties