



April 3, 2019

Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner Hayward  
Co-Chair Betsy Johnson  
Co-Chair Dan Rayfield  
Joint Committee on Ways & Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Clackamas County Courthouse Replacement Project**

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield:

We write to encourage your support for \$31.5 million in bond funding to help advance a new Clackamas County Courthouse, as requested in the Chief Justice's budget request. As legislators, we strongly support this project because it will improve public safety, access to justice, and fairness for all of our residents.

Clackamas County's courthouse serves approximately 415,000 residents in 2019, but was built in 1936 to serve 50,000 residents. Three courtrooms have grown into 11 courtrooms, but the existing courthouse has outgrown its useful life and is no longer able to support additional modifications that meet the justice and public safety needs of our communities.

Clackamas County's courthouse replacement project meets the following goals:

**Addresses public safety, delayed justice, and structural limitations**

The existing 83 year old courthouse no longer safely serves the residents of Clackamas County. As you are well aware, the existing courthouse sits on unstable soil and is precariously three feet away from a hundred foot drop into the Willamette River. In addition, its obsolete design makes it a tremendous fire hazard and its brick construction is far beyond its useful life.

Per best practices, the existing courthouse is currently three courtrooms shy of being able to timely respond to existing caseload. This is no fault of any party, but a result of limited space. As a result, we hear of trial delays that extend for months and sometimes years, depending on the case type.

Finally, the courthouse design is outdated. It lacks separate paths for victims, witnesses, prisoners and defendants. It is not uncommon for defendants to be within arm's reach of their alleged victims.

**Includes shared spaces for state agencies**

Clackamas County's foresight to co-locate the Department of Human Services and the Office of Public Defense Services in the building indicates a willingness to both physically promote shared public safety service partnerships and provide collaborative funding methods and long-term cost savings to state agencies. We also appreciate that this co-location of state services makes the project eligible for 50/50 state matching funds.

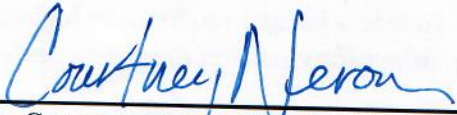
**Local commitment of funds**


The requested \$31.5 million represents one-third of the state's 50% share to the overall costs of the new building, and will launch the design and engineering phase of the replacement project.

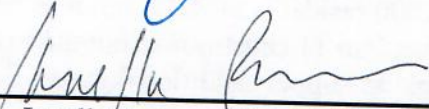
Clackamas County will seek the support of voters to pass a general obligation bond to fund its share of the courthouse replacement, and recently passed a resolution to fund the project by other local means if the voters do not approve a bond measure. In our opinion, we feel this action by the Board of County Commissioners signals a sincere level of commitment to the project.


As elected officials collectively representing almost every resident of Clackamas County, we are pleased by the county's firm commitment to see this project through in a timely fashion. We urge your support to make this a reality.

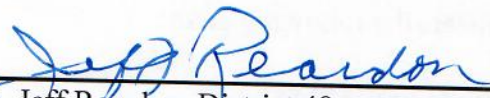
Sincerely,


  
Rep. Courtney Neron, District 26

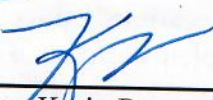
  
Rep. Mark Meek, District 40

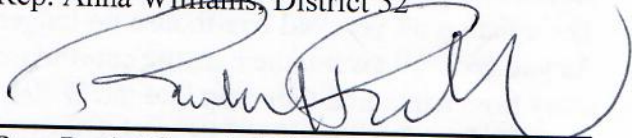
  
Rep. Janelle Bynum, District 51


  
Rep. Rick Lewis, District 18

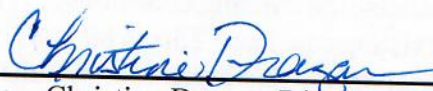
  
Rep. Jeff Reardon, District 48

  
Rep. Anna Williams, District 52

  
Rep. Karin Power, District 41

  
Rep. Rachel Prusak, District 37

  
Rep. Andrea Salinas, District 38

  
Rep. Christine Drazan, District 39

cc: Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Public Safety  
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction