



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

255 Capitol Street NE, Third Floor

Salem, OR 97310

www.oregon.gov/HigherEd

December 13, 2019

The Honorable Peter Courtney
The Honorable Tina Kotek
The Honorable Herman Baertschiger Jr
The Honorable Christine Drazan
900 Court Street NE
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear President Courtney, Speaker Kotek, Leader Baertschiger Jr, and Leader Drazan:

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission, pursuant to ORS 341.565, serves as the boundary board for the purpose of recommending to the legislature any changes that, in the opinion of the Commission, shall be made in the boundaries of community college districts.

On December 12, 2019, the Commission voted to issue a Proposed and Final Order to effect the transition the northernmost portion of Lake County from the Central Oregon Community College Service District (COCC) to the Klamath Community College Service District (KCC). This Order is attached. ORS 341.565 dictates that the Commission's Order is not final unless approved by the Legislative Assembly. This letter serves to transmit the Order to the Legislative Assembly and request action to approve the Order in the 2020 legislative session. Commission staff has engaged in background discussion with legislative staff to begin planning for this potential process.

In discharging its duties under this statutory provision, the Commission is required to hold public hearings in the affected territories. Having made a motion to shift voting precincts 13 and 14 of Lake County, comprising the northernmost section of the County, from COCC to KCC, Commission staff held the required hearings and engaged in multiple other calls and meetings with area residents, school officials, Lake County officials, and members of the Legislative Assembly. Through this process of engagement, which occurred beginning from mid-2018, the Commission found broad support for shifting the Lake County territory from COCC to KCC.

In issuing the Order, the Commission notes the following:

- The territory is currently being served by distance learning technology offered by KCC
- Residents present at the hearing believe KCC offers programming that is more aligned with the educational needs of the territory that that offered by COCC
- Lake County has a current contractual relationship with KCC and the Lakeview ESD has a positive relationship with KCC
- COCC does not have current plans to increase or improve educational services provided by COCC to the territory
- The current district boundaries are not aligned with the current contracts, relationships, and interests of the territory or broader Lake County
- The administrations of both COCC and KCC support the transition of the territory
- The COCC Board of Directors has taken formal action to support the transition

- The majority of residents present at the hearings supported the transition of the territory
- The tax liability of residents of the territory will decrease, as the KCC mill rate is currently lower than the COCC mill rate, without any loss in educational services

If approved by the Legislative Assembly in the 2020 legislative session, the Order will take effect on June 30, 2019. I know the short session is a busy time, but I hope the legislature will take action in the upcoming session to finalize this Commission action and facilitate improved higher education service delivery in Lake County.

Please contact Kyle Thomas, Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs, if you have questions regarding this letter or the Order. He can be reached at kyle.thomas@hecc.oregon.gov or 503-480-9596.

Sincerely,



Ben Cannon
Executive Director

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Rob Wagner, Chair, Senate Education Committee
The Honorable Margaret Doherty, Chair, House Education Committee
Dan Gilbert, Legislative Counsel
Lisa Gezelter, Analyst, Legislative Policy and Research Office
Alethia Miller, Analyst, Legislative Policy and Research Office
Tamara Brickman, Department of Administrative Services, Chief Financial Office
Cam Preus, Executive Director, Oregon Community College Association
Dr. Laurie Chesley, President, Central Oregon Community College
Dr. Roberto Gutierrez, President, Klamath Community College

PROPOSED AND FINAL ORDER

The Commission, upon motion and after the required public hearings, finds that the proposed changes will have no substantially adverse effect upon the ability of the affected districts to provide and continue their programs and is not made solely for tax advantages to property owners in the districts affected by the proposed changes.

The Commission orders that the territory of the Central Oregon Community College Service District (COCC) defined by voting precincts 13 and 14 of Lake County, generally comprising the northernmost section of the County, is removed from COCC and the same territory is annexed into the Klamath Community College Service District.

Approved by a vote of the Commission on December 12, 2019

David Rives

David Rives, Chairman

Ben Cannon

Ben Cannon, Executive Director