



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: April 9, 2021
TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Capital Construction
RE: HB 5505

Co-Chair Holvey and Co-Chair Girod and members of the Subcommittee:

Lane County remains committed to constructing a new courthouse facility for the Lane County Circuit Court. We very much appreciate that your Subcommittee has approved bond issuance for this project in 2016, 2017, and 2019.

Lane County placed a local general obligation bond question (Measure 20-299) onto the May, 2020 election, and it was soundly defeated by a No vote of 58%. That measure sought \$154M, which would have resulted in an approximately \$0.27 per thousand valuation tax burden for twenty years, and would have ensured the County's matching funds for the approved bonds. Lane County voters are exceedingly price sensitive, and they did not see the value in our proposition in spite of the \$94M in total state bonding which had been approved for this project.

We continued to work on ways to reduce the overall cost of this project but when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in late February, 2020, that work became harder and harder to maintain. As our communities began to feel the overall economic impact of the pandemic, we began to seriously question our chances for success with our voters for any kind of tax revenue ask until the local economy can get back on its feet.

This occurred concurrently with the budget development process for the Judicial Department. We very much appreciated the fact that the Chief Justice did include the Lane County Courthouse project in her 21-23 budget document, but at this time have notified the Department that our ability to proceed towards another local election within the 21-23 biennium is not within our current planning horizon. I want to emphasize that we have not abandoned this project. Lane County owns a full city block in downtown Eugene that is adjacent to the existing courthouse and we will continue to evolve our planning efforts for the project with the hope of being back in front of this Committee with a new proposal in two years.

Should you have any additional questions about this project, please feel free to contact me.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER