

HB 2497 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the State Court Administrator to fund the assessment of courthouses in each county with a population of less than 50,000. The assessment must examine the viability of maintaining the use of the current courthouse for the next 75 years. Requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to upgrade infrastructure or replace courthouses as determined by the assessment. Directs the state to lease space in courthouses built under this section to the county at 50 percent of market rate.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Many of Oregon's courthouses are in need of repair and infrastructure improvements. Some issues with Oregon's courthouses include seismic risk, outdated electrical systems, inability to support modern technology, HVAC and plumbing problems and physical access limitations for persons with disabilities. Maintenance of court buildings is the responsibility of the counties. However, many counties have experienced reduced revenues over the last several decades. There have been several studies on Oregon courthouses, including the *Report on Oregon Court Facilities*, by the Court Facilities Task Force (Oregon State Bar, 2006); *2008 State of the Oregon Courts*, Oregon Judicial Department (OJD, 2008), the *Report of the Interim Committees on Court Facilities*, drafted by Committee Services for the Committee (Committee Services is now LPRO, 2009), and *Lane County, Oregon Court Facility Needs Assessment*, by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC 2016).

House Bill 2497 directs the State Court Administrator to conduct an assessment of rural courthouses for future viability and requires to the state to upgrade infrastructure or replace courthouses as determined by the assessment.