

July **DRAFT**, 2023

Senate President Rob Wagner
Speaker of the House Dan Rayfield
Ways & Means Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner
Ways & Means Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez

Dear President Wagner, Speaker Rayfield, and Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez:

On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, thank you for allocating \$30 million during the 2023 legislative session for the Clackamas County Courthouse Replacement Project. While we are appreciative of the funding contained within HB 5005, it represents less than half of the state's share. For this reason, we respectfully request that the State of Oregon fulfill its obligation in providing the full state funding match on this important joint project.

Under agreement with the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD), the State has [exclusive rights](#) to control and use the courthouse. The state's own process identified Clackamas courthouse replacement as an urgent priority. Since that time, the county has worked in close partnership with OJD to design a building that meets current and future demands. The county followed all of the guidelines and complied with the requirements of the Oregon Courthouse Capital Construction and Improvement Fund (OCCCIF), including the co-location of additional state offices (the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Office of Public Defense Services). The Board of Commissioners ultimately approved moving forward in good faith that the State would honor its funding commitment by approving the Chief Justice's budget request.

Neither our offices nor our staff heard any concern about the accounting of costs for the project. Some legislators expressed "sticker shock," but inflation costs have impacted all manner of projects. ODOT recently [reported](#) construction costs have increased 72% since the beginning of 2017– and 50% just since the end of 2020 with materials the primary factor.

The Board of Commissioners' decision last July to keep the project on time is proving prudent as inflation continues to impact building materials. As a result, construction is well underway and the courthouse replacement project remains on-time and on-budget for completion by May 2025.

The need to replace courthouses across the state is great, both to effectively administer justice for a growing population and to ensure the safety of all who use the buildings. Past legislatures fulfilled the state's obligation to Jefferson and Multnomah courthouses, with Multnomah County returning to the legislature three times to request state funds. The Legislature's inability to fund the state's portion of the Clackamas courthouse would set a terrible precedent that should be



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rectified, particularly as Benton, Curry, Harney, Morrow, and other counties are in the process of advancing their own courthouse replacement projects.

We will call upon the Legislature to fulfill its half of the project at the next convening of the Oregon Legislature. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

cc: Governor Tina Kotek
Clackamas Caucus

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