

Good evening and happy Earth Day, Tri-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

I am Xan Augerot, Benton County Commissioner. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Benton County's Justice System Improvement Program. This research-based program recommended a suite of new programs and facilities, including a mental health Crisis Respite Center and a new Courthouse. The Governor's Budget includes funds for a replacement of our historic courthouse from the Courthouse Capital Construction & Improvement fund, with \$20.4M in bond authority in the 2021-23 biennium for final plans, design and construction. The county will provide 50% matching funds through a combination of approaches, including a local bond measure next May.

The proposed new courthouse is an integral piece of our Justice System Improvement Program. It will provide a desperately needed alternative to Benton County's Historic Courthouse, which was first occupied in 1889 and is the oldest courthouse in Oregon still being used for its original purpose. The new courthouse will meet current OJD best practice standards and provide:

- Seismic resilience
- Safety for staff, clients and people in custody
- Compliance with current codes, including ADA
- Energy efficiency
- Appropriate courtroom sizing and ergonomically designed work spaces

Another critical element of our Justice System Improvement is the development of a Mental Health Crisis Respite Center. A one-time investment of \$8 million from ARPA would allow us to address the behavioral health needs of our community members in the least restrictive environment possible, keeping people out of jail and the emergency room. It will also allow us to address the needs of many of our unhoused community members, allowing them to find stability and reduce their risk of justice involvement. Thank you for your time and consideration.