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DATE: April 23, 2021
TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
RE: SB 5555

Co-Chairs Senator Steiner-Hayward, Senator Johnson, and Representative Rayfield and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

Lane County appreciates that you created a virtual event to provide input on the biennial budget, and was ready to testify on April 21, 2021 but given the large audience did not get a chance to express our interest in the topic at hand. Lane County provides the following written testimony to outline our priorities that we believe are of high import to our region:

- The first is that the pandemic has elevated the importance of public health. The policy behind Public Health Modernization was and is sound: to build both foundational programs and capabilities. It has never been adequately funded and today we urge you to increase the Health Authority's request for \$30M general fund to \$65M. If there were ever an example of a penny's worth of prevention is worth a pound of cure, this is it.
- We additionally seek adequate funding for behavioral health services. This week in particular shows us how far we have to move towards crisis response and a robust treatment system. One thing we have done in Lane County is identify high utilizers of our jail, the local emergency departments, and behavioral health services, and we know that putting people into supported housing works. We've documented dramatic reductions in health care costs, and arrests. The wraparound behavioral health service delivery is key to that success. That work is done by professionals that are unfortunately in short supply and thus we very much would like to see HB 2949 make it to the Governor's desk.
- As a county with two active municipal courts in Eugene and Springfield, we are no stranger to what it takes to deliver adequate aid and assist services. While the vast majority of those we treat in our community are able to fulfill their court obligations, this work does come with some uncertain outcomes and our risk exposure is a very real and a very expensive concern. We seek support for the \$19M policy option package contained in the Oregon Health Authority's budget request as well as ensuring that this population is considered as a forensic caseload for future biennial forecasting. We also urge you to recognize that the transition from traditional policing into community based treatment has to recognize and mitigate this risk exposure. SB 198 provides a solution to this issue.
- We seek your approval of \$25.6M for Community Corrections. This amount recognizes the significant work that was done during the 2020 session to ensure this program is fully funded and represents the actual cost of serving justice involved individuals under community supervision.
- Finally, we urge a robust response package to the ongoing recovery needs of the seven counties affected by the Oregon wildfires that erupted on September 7, 2020. There are significant needs for housing supports, infrastructure, and future wildfire prevention. We know these require a mix of state and federal funding and stand ready to assist in honing those requests as necessary.