



CIRCUIT COURT OF OREGON

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
CLACKAMAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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OREGON CITY, OREGON 97045

KATHIE F. STEELE
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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Hello Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, and members of the Joint Ways & Means Capital Construction Subcommittee.

For the record, my name is Judge Kathie Steele and I am here to speak in support of the Oregon Judicial Department's request for \$21 million to close the books on the state's match of the Clackamas replacement courthouse.

Let me begin by saying thank you to the Oregon Legislature, and my Chief Justice, who have helped to advanced early funding for this project. It is not lost on us that there are many priorities across the state, but access to justice is certainly one of them.

I'm proud to report that our courthouse project is currently on track to open in 2025, and that the project is currently on time and on budget.

But those last dollars in are important and timely.

Just a quick reminder that the courthouse replacement project was one of necessity. I've brought my yardstick to reiterate how close the current courthouse is to the Willamette River.

In other words, we could not wait.

In a brave step by our county leadership recognizing both the need and rising cost of inflation, the Board of Commissioners launched this project having the confidence of the state's initial investment in 2021. As such, the early milestone payment will be due within this current biennium. It has always been the county's plan to fund this milestone payment with the state share of funding.

This has allowed the county to build this project without raising taxes.

If those remaining state dollars are not fully committed this year, Clackamas will need to find those funds elsewhere until the state can fund its share of the courthouse. The county is good for those dollars – that isn't the problem. The challenge will be the potential loss or minimizing of services to the public those dollars might otherwise be supporting.



While we appreciate the tremendous commitment the State has made to the replacement courthouse, we know that there were questions last session about project costs outside the four walls of the courthouse itself. I am pleased to say our staff has worked closely with Legislative Fiscal Office to address those questions - and even hosted a site visit of the construction site. And it is our understanding we have satisfied all remaining questions.

In conclusion, I can't speak highly enough of the good partnership between Clackamas County and the Oregon Judicial Department specific to this project. This is a good project, a good use of public dollars to deliver public services, and a good model of the state and county working together.

Thank you, and we urge your support of this \$21 million request.

Very Truly Yours,



Kathie F. Steele
Clackamas County Circuit Court Judge

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