



Steve Gunnels District Attorney

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March 3, 2025

Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 960

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 960, which appropriates funds to the Criminal Justice Commission for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Fund. This funding provides local jurisdictions with critical resources to address organized retail theft, a growing issue impacting businesses, communities, and public safety across Oregon.

Deschutes County received a portion of these funds this fiscal year, which enabled us to launch a pilot program with the Bend and Redmond Police Departments. This initiative is helping us build trust and relationships with our retailers, so we are seeing firsthand the true impact of theft on their businesses. The funding has been instrumental in helping us achieve these initial steps, and develop a comprehensive strategy to improve our investigations and proactively deter retail theft going forward.

The complexity of ORT demands a sustained and well-resourced approach. SB 960 ensures that counties and municipalities can build on their successful strategies and avoid setbacks due to funding limitations. Without ongoing support, many jurisdictions will struggle to maintain a response level that will effectively address these crimes.

Oregon's investment in ORT enforcement and prevention is commendable. This funding fosters collaboration which will lead to stronger case outcomes and economic protections for businesses and consumers alike. I encourage you to support SB 960 to ensure we can continue building on the progress achieved to date.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions regarding Deschutes County's experience with the ORT program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Gunnels".

Steve Gunnels
Deschutes County District Attorney