



VANESSA CORNWALL

Intergovernmental Relations Officer
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DATE: February 11, 2026
TO: House Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Lane County
RE: Support for Oregon House Bill 4043

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallen, and Members of the Committee:

Lane County is providing this testimony in support of HB 4043 and to voice our gratitude to this committee for advancing legislation to expand the solution set for counties as we grapple with the challenges of working with the Legislature and the Oregon Judicial Department to provide adequate space for state Circuit Courts.

Here in Eugene, the Lane County Circuit Court operates out of a 1959 building that is sorely in need of improvement and we've been working on this challenge for several years now. Back in 2017, the Legislature allocated bond increment for construction of a new courthouse, but our voters did not support a local measure to finance our local 50% share.

Flash forward nearly a decade, we're seeing a growing set of challenges with the old model. Construction costs have skyrocketed while state and local budgets are stretched thin to cover operating costs. New capital projects are an increasingly hard sell. We've heard this clearly in the AOC-OJD Court Facilities Task Force meetings over the past several months.

In Lane County, the most cost-effective path for us is a more complex project that involves buying and renovating an existing building in our downtown core and then moving other county functions around to create space for court operations in the existing Courthouse. Significant renovations will be required in the Courthouse to achieve alignment with 2015 National Center for State Courts (NCSC) guidelines.

This is a complexity that doesn't fit existing statute and process well – HB 4043 is a good step in the right direction toward allowing for greater creativity in how we modernize our court facilities. I would note that the construction cost inflation rate for the \$19m cap in 2013 dollars in ORS 1.181 section 1 is significant. Some building cost inflation calculators suggest over 100% increase in costs since 2013 to date – so that \$19m cap gets you half as far now as it did in 2013.

Lane County would love to work with this committee and other stakeholders on court facility financing legislation during the interim.

We urge support for this bill, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICER