



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

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March 28, 2023

House Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street NE
HR D State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Re: House Bill 2497 – Direct State Court Administrator to fund assessment of courthouses in small counties.

Honorable Chair Kropf, Honorable Vice Chairs, and members of the committee:

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners urge your support for House Bill (HB) 2497.

For the past 15 years, Oregon counties have actively participated in a coordinated state-wide effort with the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) and our legislature to assess the condition of court facilities, identify deficiencies, and prioritize funding for long-overdue improvement and/or replacement projects. This effort has confirmed that each county is unique and approaches providing suitable and sufficient facilities to meet the needs of our judicial systems differently. For some counties building new court facilities will be the only viable option. For others, the solution is to reconfigure, renovate, and/or expand their existing courthouses.

The Clatsop County Courthouse is in need of significant security improvement source to facilitate safe access to the judicial system by our community. Its lack of single-point source entry and an elevator nearing the end of its lifecycle are a substantial threat to public access and safety. Findings of a 2019 courthouse vulnerability assessment, demonstrate the urgency of these necessary improvements.

HB 2497 provides a means for the County to address these courthouse vulnerabilities.

With a population of just under 42,000, our rural county lacks the tax base to capitalize these necessary improvements. HB 2497 creates an equitable path for us to assess and fund essential courthouse improvements in partnership with the State of Oregon and we urge your support.

Respectfully,

Mark Kujala, Chair
Clatsop County Board of Commissioners