



OKANOGAN COUNTY

Board of Commissioners

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Commissioner District 1
Ray Campbell
Commissioner District 2
Jim Detro
Commissioner District 3
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Clerk of the Board

February 26, 2013

Senator Linda Evans Parlette
12th Legislative District
309 Legislative Building
PO Box 40412
Olympia, WA 98504-0412

Dear Senator Parlette,

Our Juvenile Court Administrator recently briefed us, as incoming Okanogan County Commissioners, on the merits of the "Okanogan County Justice Complex" project. This is an innovative capital project that not only creates a modern and more efficient juvenile detention center, but also provides additional needed courtrooms and areas for court support. We understand you toured County facilities last summer, became familiar with its many needs, and were given an overview of the scope of the proposed capital project. Your interest in this project and your continued support is crucial and very much appreciated in our effort to obtain funding.

During your visit, you heard about how the facilities of Okanogan County no longer support the growing needs and mandates for essential services in our community. Our ten-bed juvenile detention facility is one of the most obsolete in the State and wholly inadequate for safely housing juvenile offenders who have committed serious crimes. Most often, juvenile offenders are in need of serious treatment services for substance abuse and mental health. The current facility is seriously outmoded which makes it a challenge to manage and provide essential services for such a population.

Our courts are also obsolete and inadequate for providing safe and efficient services. You saw how our existing historic courthouse has been modified over the years to add additional courtroom space and that conference rooms are now being used for court hearings. Civil trials are often delayed due to lack of courtroom space as criminal matters take precedence. None of the courtrooms, or the courthouse itself, has adequate security. Judges must walk through public corridors to access their courtrooms; residents coming here for administrative purposes must make their way through those waiting in the hallways for court hearings. Upgraded infrastructure is essential in the County's ability to provide basic County services and programs in a safe, secure, and efficient environment.

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The proposed "Okanogan County Justice Complex," is a relatively small capital investment that solves many large problems the County encounters with public safety and service delivery efficiency. This \$19.5 million multi-phase construction project cleverly adjoins a three-story addition to the existing Administration Building while remaining in the same footprint as current existing facilities. The result combines a modern juvenile detention center with plenty of classroom and treatment areas, contemporary courtrooms, jury deliberation rooms, and court support offices into one completely secure facility.

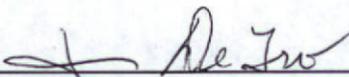
We, the Board of Okanogan County Commissioners, wholeheartedly and unanimously support every effort to advance this project. The County's limited bonding capacity and the uncertain ability to increase voter approved taxes, however, make it difficult to move this project forward without funding assistance from the State.

We are committed to increasing public and employee safety and security, providing better access to services, reducing wait time for trial dates, delivering quality juvenile and family services, and creating local jobs in the community.

We thank you for your continued support and sponsorship of the citizens of Okanogan County.

Respectfully Submitted,

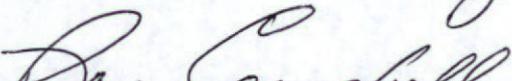
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