

May 13, 2019

The Honorable Bill Monning
California State Senate
State Capitol Room 4040

The Honorable Anna Caballero
California State Senate
State Capitol Room 5052

The Honorable Robert Rivas
California State Assembly
State Capitol Room 5158

The Honorable Mark Stone
California State Assembly
State Capitol Room 3146

RE: Update on Proposed Greenfield Courthouse Project and Status of Monterey County Courthouse

Dear Monterey County Legislative Delegation:

On behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, I am writing you to provide an update on the Greenfield Courthouse Project as well as the status of the Monterey County Courthouse.

Greenfield Courthouse

As you know, the 2018-19 enacted State Budget included funding for the top ten active Judicial Branch Courthouse Construction Program projects, and directed the Judicial Council to re-evaluate and re-rank all 190 court project that were included on the list. The Judicial Council's ranking list included the "New South Monterey County Courthouse," or Greenfield Courthouse project, as number 24 out of 27. The project was one of ten on the "indefinitely-delayed" list due to a lack of State funding. The project scope and cost estimate that the original ranking was based on, have changed significantly.

This project is an important priority for the County, as our community members face extreme access-to-justice issues, with the next closest courthouse being located on the other side of our large county boundaries. For residents of South Monterey County that could mean a 1.5 hour drive each way (3 hours total) to the Aguajito Courthouse in Monterey that handles all civil and family law cases, including obtaining temporary restraining orders. The City of Greenfield and the County of Monterey, in collaboration with the Courts, have been working diligently to come up with ways to fund a portion of the project locally, lower the overall cost of the project, and position the project for construction in a timely manner. Through these efforts, we have reduced the overall project cost from the original estimate of \$49 million, to \$33 million. In addition, the City of Greenfield has committed to fund up to \$10 million toward the project, a significant matching amount. Once full funding is secured, the project is positioned to begin construction quickly and is shovel ready.

We understand the Judicial Council is currently working to re-rank the projects and release a new draft project list in August 2019 with an opportunity for public comment. We are hopeful that the Greenfield Courthouse project will be included and prioritized for funding.

Monterey County Courthouse

In response to community concerns that the Monterey County Courthouse (Aguajito Courthouse in Monterey) was seismically unsafe, we would also like to alleviate any confusion about the safety of this Courthouse. In March 2017, the State released a report rating seismic risk of Superior Court Buildings in California. Although the Courthouse was reported as being very high risk, an initial assessment of the available building data by the County's Resource Management Agency staff determined that there was no eminent risk to occupants. To be certain of this, Monterey County engaged RIM Architects and ZFA Structural Engineers to do a more in depth assessment, including physical site inspections that were not done as part of the State's report. This report was completed on June 30, 2018 and concludes that there are no structural issues at the Monterey County Courthouse. What is driving the State's high hazard assessment is that the building codes have changed and the buildings have not. As such, the buildings do not meet current seismic regulations. However, the buildings have withstood significant seismic events like the Loma Prieta earthquake. Based on the information available, the County's Building Official found "no indication of an immediate threat" to the structural integrity of the building.

We appreciate your support and attention to this issue and important Courthouse project. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the County's representatives at Nossaman, Jennifer Capitolo or Ashley Walker at 916-442-8888.

Sincerely,

John M. Phillips
Chair, Board of Supervisors