



# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon  
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## DESCHUTES COUNTY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

8:00 AM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2024

ZOOM MEETING

A legislative work session was held on Friday, January 26, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform.

<b>Deschutes County Attendance:</b>			
x	Commissioner Patti Adair, Chair		Nick Lelack, County Administrator
x	Commissioner Anthony DeBone, Vice Chair	x	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
x	Commissioner Phil Chang	x	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator
x	Kristie Bollinger, Property Manager		Tim Brownell, Director Solid Waste
x	Sara Crosswhite, Director 9-1-1		Steve Dennison, County Clerk
x	Chris Doty, Director Road Department	x	David Doyle, Legal Counsel
	Charles Fadeley, Justice of the Peace	x	Janice Garceau, Director Health Services
x	Stephen Gunnels, District Attorney	x	Peter Gutowsky, Director Community Development
x	Geoff Hinds, Director Fair & Expo	x	Kathleen Hinman, Director Human Resources
	Deevy Holcomb, Director Community Justice		Bill Kuhn, Treasurer
	Scot Langton, Assessor		Keith MacNamara, Manager Veteran's Services
x	Tania Mahood, Director Information Technology	x	Kevin Moriarty, Forester
	Shane Nelson, Sheriff	x	Elizabeth Pape, Internal Auditor
x	Lee Randall, Director Facilities	x	Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer

x	Tom Kuhn, Public Health Program Manager	x	Holly Harris, Director Behavioral Health
x	Heather Kaisner, Director Public Health	x	Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager
x	Angie Powers, Administrative Assistant		
<b>Others Present:</b>			
x	Doug Riggs, Director NW Policy Advocates		
<b>Legislators Present:</b>			
x	Rep. E. Werner Reschke	x	Sen. Dennis Linthicum
x	Sen. Lynn Findley	x	Sen. Tim Knopp
x	Rep. Jason Kropf	x	Ashley DuPuis, Rep. Kropf's Office
x	Calista Songstad, Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson's Office		

## 1. Introductions

Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Legislators introduced themselves and described the geographic area they represent.

## 2. Legislative Priorities Review from NW Policy Advocates

### a. Community Corrections

Doug reported there has been a decrease in the Department of Corrections population resulting in less money to counties. The acuity level has dramatically increased and poses a challenge in determining which services to cut. There is a collective \$16 million bridge funding financial request from counties for statewide Community Corrections. This funding would take counties through the second part of the biennium without significant cuts to programs.

### b. Behavioral Health

- i. **Aid and Assist** – The Mosman decision had significant impacts on this population and reduced the amount of time patients can stay at the state hospital. There has been a 400% increase in this population coming through counties without an increase in funding. The County is in support of a \$7.5 million statewide request for the immediate needs of this population. Holly Harris shared that a formula would likely be created to determine the amount of funding for Deschutes County.
- ii. Commissioner DeBone commented on the positive collaboration and open communication amongst AOC, sharing that the next AOC Legislative Open House will take place in Salem on February 5 at 4 p.m. Doug echoed these comments.

### c. Houselessness

- i. Doug spoke about a key priority in our region, a \$1.8 million request from CORE3 for Redmond’s 21<sup>st</sup> Street. This would provide safe access for future development, Oasis Village, a proposed RV park and other areas serving the unhoused population. Commissioner DeBone said that in addition to housing opportunities, the economic opportunities provided by this CORE3 request are great as it would allow for connectivity and access to a large swath of land.
- ii. There are three housing bills: the governor’s LC19 bill, a House Bill written by Rep. Maxine Dexter, and a Senate Bill.

**d. Measure 110 Reform**

- i. Doug emphasized not to lose sight of the important investments that must take place relative to treatment resources for substance use disorder.
- ii. DA Gunnels echoed Doug’s comments and believes the problem with the current proposal is that it’s complicated and may not work as proposed. A Class A misdemeanor is needed to incentivize addicts to seek treatment.
- iii. Commissioner Chang emphasized that criminal sentences must be structured as drivers to get people into treatment and onto recovery. He acknowledged the ongoing debate around the misdemeanor level.

**e. Water Issues**

- i. Doug reported that groundwater rulemaking at the Water Resources Department has created controversy. Two rules advisory committees have been created. Place-based planning provides an opportunity for the Deschutes basin to come up with solutions drawing from the strengths of those at the table.
- ii. Soil and water conservation districts are working on juniper remediation projects funded by the measure that passed last June.
- iii. Commissioner Chang emphasized the need to figure out how to use groundwater more efficiently, adding that we are entering a new era of collaboration to address declining groundwater levels in our region.
- iv. Chair Adair spent some time calling well drillers in our region and it was a very useful exercise.

**f. Other Issues**

- i. Transportation: ROW fees**
  - 1. The main transportation issues relate to long-term funding and right-of-way permit/fee issues.
- ii. Law Enforcement Bargaining Unit Issues**
  - 1. There are two bills of interest to Deschutes County and relate to expanding bargaining for law enforcement.
- iii. ADU Statutory Fix**
  - 1. In 2025, there will be a SB 644 technical fix.

### **3. Updates and Priority Briefing from Legislators**

Sen. Findley agreed with Commissioner Chang on groundwater issues. Groundwater and well issues are important topics for the region to address.

Sen. Knopp said that homelessness, housing affordability, and Measure 110 reform are the top issues of this session. He looks forward to addressing these issues and thanked everyone for their engagement.

Sen. Linthicum recommends water be stored in reservoirs. He added that four dams on the Klamath River are being removed and the reservoirs drained.

Rep. Reschke had no additional comments to add.

Rep. Kropf shared that the initial addiction framework was rolled out on Tuesday. The budget framework is in process, addressing how to make investments in addiction infrastructure. Chair Adair's opinion is that possession be a Class A (not C) misdemeanor. Rep. Kropf shared that law enforcement wants a tool to intervene on the streets instead of taking people to jail. There will be changes to drug delivery laws, so the DA has the tools necessary to prosecute drug dealers. Commissioner DeBone added that county sheriffs, district attorneys and commissioners are asking for more, and would like a Class A misdemeanor for possession of small amounts of illegal drugs. Rep. Kropf responded that the proposal is a framework, and possession of larger amounts is still a Class A, and it provides additional funding for drug treatment courts. The intent is to preserve and enhance funding for addiction treatment services to provide help for those wanting it.

Calista Songstad from Rep. Iverson's office, asked for data on the number of low-barrier and high-barrier shelter beds in our county. Chair Adair will get back to Calista with these numbers, adding that 2-1-1 is a phone number those in need can call.

### **4. Department Head Updates**

Janice Garceau is concerned that if the penalty is increased without increasing funding for the treatment resources, it puts treatment providers in a bind. The challenge will be to provide serious incentives to get people into treatment and seriously fund treatment resources. Doug said that investments in youth prevention will be critical. Additionally, the housing package plays a role in addiction prevention and recovery.

Peter spoke about the rural ADU fix. Without a correction, ADUs that are located in areas designated as high wildfire risk but outside the wildland urban interface will

require fire hardening. Commissioner Chang asked Peter how many of these properties meet this designation, and to please flag this request for further analysis.

**Next Meeting:** The next virtual legislative update meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 2 at 8:00 a.m. The next meetings with legislators in attendance will take place on February 9 and 23.

**Adjourn:** Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 8:56 a.m.

*Respectfully Submitted by:*

  
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**Angie Powers, Administrative Assistant**