



# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon  
(541) 388-6571

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

## DESCHUTES COUNTY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

8:00 AM

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025

ZOOM MEETING

A legislative work session was held on Friday, March 14, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform.

<b>Deschutes County Attendance:</b>			
x	Commissioner Anthony DeBone, Chair	x	Nick Lelack, County Administrator
x	Commissioner Patti Adair, Vice Chair	x	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
x	Commissioner Phil Chang	x	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator
	Kristie Bollinger, Property Manager		Tim Brownell, Director Solid Waste
x	Sara Crosswhite, Director 9-1-1	x	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		Peter Gutowsky, Director Community Development
x	Holly Harris, Director Behavioral Health	x	Geoff Hinds, Director Fair & Expo
x	Deevy Holcomb, Director Community Justice	x	Heather Kaisner, Director Public Health
	Sean Kirk, Manager Veteran's Services	x	Bill Kuhn, Treasurer
x	Tom Kuhn, Public Health Program Manager	x	Scot Langton, Assessor
x	Tania Mahood, Director Information Technology	x	Kevin Moriarty, Forester
x	Elizabeth Pape, Internal Auditor	x	Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager

x	Brenda Fritsvold, BOCC Executive Assistant	x	Lee Randall, Facilities Director
	Kim Riley, Senior Assistant Legal Counsel	x	Robert Tittle, Chief Financial Officer
	Kent van der Kamp, Sheriff		Aaron Wells, Undersheriff
x	Heather Herauf, Procurement Manager		Daniel Kieffer, Budget & Financial Planning Analyst
<b>Others Present:</b>			
x	Doug Riggs, Director NW Policy Advocates	x	Corey Barber, Outreach Director NW Policy Advocates
	Emma Innes, Associate NW Policy Advocates		

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair DeBone called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

### 2. Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner DeBone said at the Board's meeting on Monday, the County will host a roundtable with representatives from various jurisdictions and other entities regarding **HB 3556**, which involves potential changes to how Transient Room Tax (TRT) revenues can be used.

Commissioner DeBone reported he traveled to Denver with other persons involved in the Deschutes County CORE3 effort to tour three similar facilities, which was highly informative.

Commissioner Chang recapped discussions he had with the co-chairs and vice chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation regarding a transportation package on Wednesday, including possible revenue sources such as a road user charge.

### 3. Updates from NW Policy Advocates

Doug Riggs reported hearings were held on many proposed bills in the past week, including some involving behavioral health issues such as substance use treatment. At the national level, it appears that reduced federal funding may affect a \$2 million appropriation to the CORE3 project. **HB 3342** would give the Water Resource Department the ability to deny applications both inside and outside the UGB.

### 4. Review Bill Tracker Report by Department

Whitney Hale summarized that **SB 902** would lower the retirement age for PERS for those classified under police and fire to age 50 from 53. PERS has provided some

testimony regarding the potential impacts if this change is made, and AOC has not taken a position. She recommended this bill be monitored but no position taken by the Board at this time. Robert Tintle noted that in the last session, the retirement age was changed for Deputy District Attorneys, which increases the liability for the PERS system at the same time that system is experiencing pressure. Board position: priority 2 / neutral / follow.

Tom Kuhn spoke to **HB 3221** which is supported by the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) and would direct the development of a prevention strategy for substance use and misuse, and hopefully enhance prevention services in the future. Kuhn explained that a primary aim is to dissuade against substance use before that happens. Heather Kaisner said that Public Health's primary goal is to see the success of **HB 2954**, which would fund prevention services. Board position: priority 2 / support.

Janice Garceau provided an update on efforts to secure funding for a child psychiatric facility in Central Oregon, saying Rep. Levy's office is willing to submit a request for \$3.8 million, with the County's Behavioral Health department as the pass-through entity. Commissioner Adair reported that the request from St. Charles for \$750,000 from the Central Oregon Health Council for this facility was approved yesterday. Garceau shared that property in Redmond has been identified as a possible location for siting this facility. Commissioner Chang reported that he personally delivered the County's Congressionally-directed spending allocation requests to the County's Congressional delegation when in Washington, DC earlier this month, noting it remains to be seen whether any such allocations will be approved or funded.

Discussion ensued of federal funding approved for the La Pine Community Health Center and the reported ineligibility of a child psychiatric facility for HUD funds.

Commissioner Adair said Tuesday has been designated as "Behavioral Health" day in Salem. Garceau referred to ongoing discussions about opening the 309 rules to address administrative burdens, which she supported.

Nick Lelack said while the summary of **HB 2138** refers to unincorporated communities, the text makes clear that it only applies to unincorporated communities inside of UGBs. Commissioner Chang explained the support of the Regional Housing Council for this bill. Board position: priority 3 / monitor.

Riggs said **SB 916** is controversial and would mandate the payment of unemployment benefits to striking workers beginning the week after a strike was declared. Public employees would be eligible along with those working in the private sector, although public workers have not traditionally paid into the unemployment

fund. Many counties pay unemployment costs directly. Both AOC and LOC oppose this bill along with numerous counties. It passed out 3 -2 out of committee after five hearings.

Erik Kropp reminded that Deschutes County is self-insured for unemployment and recommended the Board oppose the bill. Tintle said the maximum allowable benefit would be more than \$800 per week per person. Commissioner Chang said while he strongly supported the right to strike, because striking should involve some sacrifice which serves to demonstrate the worker's convictions in terms of their contract, he did not support this bill. Tintle added that during a strike, both sides must be motivated to reach an agreement. Board position: priority 2 / oppose. Patterson referred to a draft letter of opposition to this bill, which Commissioners Adair and DeBone were in agreement to sign. Commissioner Chang asked for time to review the letter before adding his signature.

Commissioner Chang said a hearing was held earlier this week on **HB 3806** which relates to the ability to be compensated for water conservancy. He explained the environmental benefits of the bill, which would allow the Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) to share water with farmers in the North Unit Irrigation District during the summer, with the latter releasing more water during the winter from the Wickiup Reservoir to build winter flows in accordance with the habitat conservation plan for the Upper Deschutes basin. He believed that most stakeholders support this bill as drafted. Riggs reported on parties which testified in support of this bill and expected to see it pass in the next few weeks. Commissioners DeBone and Adair spoke to the importance of the agriculture industry in Jefferson County. Board position: priority 2 / support.

Patterson said **HB 3191** would provide funding for arts and cultural organizations, including a \$2 million allocation to the High Desert Museum. No hearing is scheduled at this point. Board position: priority 2 / support.

**Next Meeting:** Friday, March 21st at 8:00 am

**Adjourn:** Chair DeBone adjourned the meeting at 8:02 a.m.

*Respectfully Submitted by:*



**Brenda Fritsvold, Executive Assistant**