



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF EL DORADO**

1354 Johnson Boulevard, Ste. 2  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150  
(530) 573-3064 - Fax (530) 544-6532

**SUZANNE N. KINGSBURY  
PRESIDING JUDGE**

September 23, 2011

Court Facility Working Group  
Honorable Brad R. Hill, Chair  
Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal  
Fifth Appellate District

Re: Support for El Dorado New Placerville Courthouse  
SB 1407 Project

Dear Justice Hill and Court Facility Working Group Members,

We are writing this letter to you to urge you not to delay or cancel plans for El Dorado County's new Placerville Courthouse project. For the reasons stated in this letter, we believe that it is imperative that the state move forward with completion of the Site Acquisition Phase and that we be selected as a priority project to continue to the next phase, Preliminary Planning.

Our county has attempted, without success, to erect a new courthouse to consolidate its functions on the western slope of the county for over 20 years. Since the early 1990's the county and court has been planning, off and on, to erect a new courthouse at a site next to our main jail. In the early 2000's the county purchased a facility in the town of Diamond Springs called the "Logan Building" and for several years planned to remodel this building to support family law court operations. This plan never came to fruition because the expense associated with retrofitting an existing structure for court use exceeded the value of the project, and the building was ultimately sold. At the time, the county committed to hold the sale proceeds in trust to help offset costs associated with the state's eventual courthouse construction in our jurisdiction.

Due to a lack of funding for facilities by the county over the years, coupled with concomitant explosion of our population, our courts are comprised of three inadequate

stand-alone facilities existing within less than 20 miles of one another. This number will expand to four facilities by 2012. This hodgepodge of structures creates significant inefficiencies in staffing and the delivery of services to court users. By virtue of this space limitation, the court has had to allocate court functions by location, meaning that court users do not have “one stop shopping” for court services and calendars are delayed as attorneys are sometimes required to be in two locations at one time. This also increases traffic flow and is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources.

El Dorado County has been one of the fastest growing areas in the state. The last time that our court received a new judgeship (other than commissioner conversions) was in 1977, when the seat in which Judge Kingsbury serves was created in South Lake Tahoe. During the 34 years since that occurred, our county's population has more than quadrupled, increasing from 43,833 in 1970 to 181,050 in 2010. We have six full time judges in the western part of our county and two in the eastern part of our county, along with one subordinate judicial officer. Each of our bench officers handles every case type. Due to the crowding of our calendars, we only hold jury trials three days a week, and hold other calendars on the non-trial days.

We currently have four court facilities spread over nearly 100 miles and are in the processing of remodeling space at the Placerville Juvenile Hall for a Juvenile Court, making five court facilities within the county. On the western slope, none of our courthouses has an extra courtroom to handle visiting judges or overflow. Most of our courthouses are not ADA compliant, and have major seismic, life safety and security problems that cannot be rectified through remodeling. None of our courthouses have jury assembly rooms or any place for jurors to congregate other than the limited lobby and stairwell space. There are limited or no meeting rooms for litigants and their attorneys or for witnesses.

Our oldest courthouse, which is located on Main Street in Placerville, is immediately adjacent to Highway 50. Judges and staff must park in a non-secure area in full view of this major thoroughfare. Parking for jurors in downtown Placerville is inadequate requiring jurors to park outside the downtown area and be shuttled to the Court from a distance of nearly a mile away. Prisoners are brought into the rear door that is also used by judges and staff, and are escorted through a public hallway, into the only elevator in the building, and then through another public hallway on the third floor. This creates significant risk to public safety and unnecessarily places victims of and witnesses to crimes in close proximity to alleged perpetrators. There are no holding cells in this courthouse, and prisoners must be kept in courtrooms or jury deliberation rooms until all of the in custody matters are concluded. Detained children in delinquency proceedings, who are entitled by law to have their cases kept confidential, also must be escorted through public areas in the same manner, wearing readily identifiable institutional attire. This building, which was constructed in 1911, has been plagued with water leaks from an adjacent creek, mold, asbestos, and falling clay corbels posing health and safety risks for court users and staff.

Our other court in Placerville is relatively new and is located in the county government complex. It is housed in a mixed use building that predominantly houses county offices associated with building and planning. Our court administration offices are literally intermingled with staff members from the building department. Over half of this administrative space consists of open cubicles that can be accessed by anyone who works for the building department. On that same floor, our traffic department public counter is in an open area not protected by perimeter security. Traffic matters are heard three days a week in the planning department hearing room, once again without benefit of perimeter security. The only perimeter security at this site is contained in the basement, where there is another courtroom in which only criminal matters are heard.

Our other major court facility is in Cameron Park. This building was also constructed during the 1970s and is in relatively good condition. There is a very small public waiting area, and jurors, witnesses, victims and other court users must mingle together in very tight quarters. There is no holding cell for prisoners; the judge's chambers are small and cramped; there is no secured parking; the parking for jurors is inadequate causing jurors to park on narrow street shoulders; and there is limited space for file storage. In 2009 the County added a modular facility to this site which provides a hearing room for small claims, unlawful detainer and alternative dispute resolution calendars and three attorney offices. There is a huge security risk for this modular unit as perimeter security is in the main building and the modular can be accessed through the unmanned gate.

Our county's criminal caseload has increased an average of 7% annually and we have experienced a massive increase in the number of high profile cases, including cases where the defendant is accused of being a serial killer. The number of murder cases, in particular, have burgeoned. As a result, cases are continued repeatedly or dismissed due to lack of an available courtroom. Crime victims and witnesses become understandably angry and frustrated at the delay. Civil trials are frequently vacated to make room for a criminal trial that has statutory priority, leaving businesses and individuals without a prompt resolution of their disputes. Our family law litigants have trials continued over a period of weeks or months due to a lack of calendar time because other cases have precedence.

As indicated above, the western slope of the county will have four court facilities in 2012. If our construction project is allowed to move forward, the resulting consolidation of three of the four locations will allow for increased efficiencies of judicial officers, staff, and greatly improve delivery of services to court users. The average cost for perimeter security per facility is currently \$110,050. If we are to consolidate three of our four locations, we may see a reduction in perimeter security costs of approximately \$330,000 annually. The court currently contracts for janitorial services at two of our court facilities and the county provides janitorial services at two facilities. County janitorial costs are approximately \$0.70 cents more per square foot than contract services. We may see a savings of \$25,000 annually in janitorial services when the facilities are consolidated and services are contracted through the

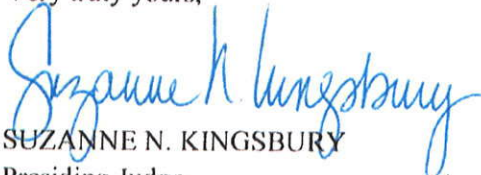
solicitation process. With the new Placerville Courthouse our court will also transition to a court owned and operated telephone system and will have increased file storage capacity. Although we currently do not have hard estimates on the savings for telephones or file storage, we know that transitioning off the county telephone system and removing records from off-site storage will reduce our operating costs significantly.

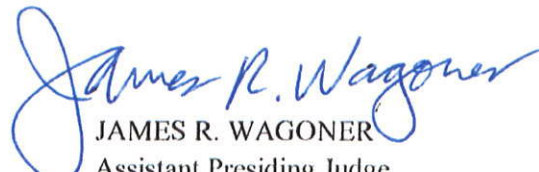
\$2,795,000 has been authorized for the Site Acquisition Phase of our project which is a very low funding amount to purchase approximately six acres. Supervisors and county administration wants us to move from the county government complex shared use facility because they need the office space for their own operations. To facilitate this effort, the county has offered to provide land next to the county jail in exchange for the building space and to assist our court in realizing a new courthouse. The court, county, AOC and community have invested over two years in the Site Selection/Site Acquisition phase of this project. We are very concerned that with a delay at this stage the county may become frustrated and withdraw the land that they have pledged to provide for the new courthouse and put that resource to another use. If the county were to withdraw the pledged land, with the minimal funding allocation for Site Acquisition, our project may require new Budget Act authority for the Acquisition phase.

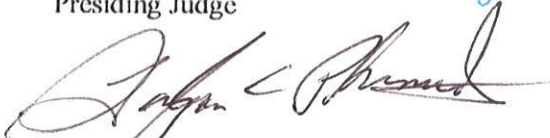
We urge the Court Facilities Working Group to recommend that the El Dorado New Placerville Courthouse not be delayed or canceled, that the Site Acquisition Phase be completed in FY 12/13 and our project moved forward to Preliminary Plan phase immediately.


Enclosed you will find letters of support for our project from state, county, city, local bar and justice partners. We have also enclosed photos depicting the deficiencies of our western slope facilities.

Very truly yours,

  
SUZANNE N. KINGSBURY  
Presiding Judge

  
JAMES R. WAGONER  
Assistant Presiding Judge

  
DOUGLAS C. PHIMISTER  
Judge

  
DANIEL B. PROUD  
Judge



STEVEN C. BAILEY  
Judge




KENNETH J. MELIKIAN  
Judge



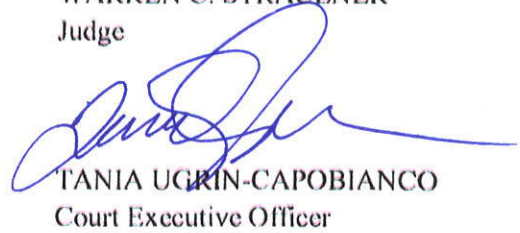
NELSON K. BROOKS  
Judge



WARREN C. STRACENER  
Judge



DYLAN SULLIVAN  
Commissioner



TANIA UGRIN-CAPOBIANCO  
Court Executive Officer

Enclosures

cc: Jody Patel, Regional Director, AOC Northern/Central Regional Office



**El Dorado County Superior Court**

**Western Slope Facilities**

# Main Street Clerk's Counter





Main Street Lobby/Jury waiting,  
approximately 800 sq. ft.



# Jurors Arrive by Bus at Main Street Court from Off-Site Parking Lot



# Jurors & Public Enter Main Street



# Juror Check In Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, approximately 700 sq. ft.



# Main Street Defendant Transport to Courtroom



# Main Street ADA Access



# Main Street Parking w/Security, 26 parking spaces for judges, staff, security & service



# Building C Main Entrance No Security





# Building C Traffic Counter



# Building C, Shared Court/County Workstations and Open Court Files



# Building C, Shared Court/County Work Area and Open Court Files



# Building C, Department 7 Security



# Cameron Park, Perimeter Security & Lobby/Jury Assembly – 710 Sq. Ft.



# Cameron Park, Clerk's Counter



# Cameron Park, Unsecure Gate to Modular Facility



# Cameron Park, Civil & Probate File Room





**BRAD CLARK**  
**ATTORNEY AT LAW**  
*Brian Briggs, Associate*  
*Dennis Brimer, of Counsel*

Placerville Office  
243 Placerville Drive  
Placerville, California 95667

[www.bradclarklaw.com](http://www.bradclarklaw.com)  
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Placerville (530) 621-4170  
Folsom (916) 932-7413  
Fax (530) 621-2910

September 16, 2011

RECEIVED IN  
COURT ADMIN

SEP 19 2011

Court Administration  
2850 Fairlane Court, Building C  
Placerville, CA 95667

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Re: New Placerville Courthouse

To Whom It May Concern,

I am an attorney licensed to practice before all of the courts of the State of California. I am sending this letter to you in support of a new courthouse in the City of Placerville, California, and to explain why our County desperately needs it.

I am also a long time resident of this community and my law practice is based in El Dorado County. One of the major reasons we need a new courthouse in Placerville is the fact that I (like all the other local attorneys) am currently required to travel to four different courts throughout the county (one in South Lake Tahoe, one in Cameron Park, and two in Placerville) in order to conduct regular business and advocate for my clients. This travel time impacts my clients and it impacts my ability to take on cases. A new courthouse would eliminate this problem because it would provide enough space to have all the courts under one roof. It makes sense to put the new courthouse in Placerville because the City is a central location in the County and provides greater ease of access to all.

Additionally, more court space is needed for the litigants of El Dorado County. With the space we have now it is very difficult to practice law the way it should be done. Some examples will illustrate my point here. In the downtown Placerville courthouse, there are no additional rooms for parties seeking to enter into settlement negotiations or for attorney's to have confidential communications with their clients. As a result we are often standing out in the hallway having what should be very private discussion and trying to do so in hushed tones while other people rush about the court doing their business. In the Cameron Park courthouse, there is not enough room for debtor examinations, and attorneys are lucky if they can conduct such examinations in a spare jury room; more likely than not several of these examinations are done in the court hallways. Not only is this situation frustrating, it is a fire hazard. On many occasions when no courtroom is available, I have had my cases transferred to another location where a courtroom happens to be available. This has caused frantic trips by all counsel, clients, and witnesses carrying boxes on trial materials and often computer equipment, who all anticipated trial in say Placerville only to be moved that same day to Cameron Park.

A new courthouse in Placerville will usher the El Dorado County court system into the modern era. The current courts are vastly inadequate for the needs of today's litigants. The downtown courthouse (although beautiful) is over 100 years old and not equipped to handle modern technology such as fiber optic or HDMI cables. On top of that the water fountains in the downtown courthouse have not worked for over one year. In the last year I recall no less than three occasions when I was either present at, or contacted the Cameron Park courthouse, and was told by the clerk that the entire computer system was down. When the computer system goes down, things stop, calendars get mixed-up, and although a document may get filed stamped it cannot be input into the system. A new courthouse would solve these problems and make current technology available for the court staff and residents of this County.

My understanding is that if a new courthouse were built adjacent to the El Dorado County Jail it would allow for the construction of an underground tunnel for prisoner transport. That is a fantastic idea which I fully support for several reasons. First, El Dorado County would save a significant amount of money in the cost of the transportation of prisoners, and in these difficult economic times that equates to jobs for local residents. Second, driving prisoners to various courts sometimes causes unnecessary delay of proceedings because even the Sheriff's department gets caught in traffic. Sometimes attorneys will be waiting over an hour for an in-custody prisoner to be brought into court. A tunnel between the jail and the court would make the entry and exit of prisoners more efficient.

A new courthouse in Placerville will help centralize judicial functions and save the County and the State money. A new courthouse will make it easier for attorneys to conduct their business and thus better represent our clients. Please consider El Dorado County as a county with an immediate need for a new courthouse. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Clark', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Brad Clark, Esq.

DOUGLAS R. ROECA  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

3062 CEDAR RAVINE ROAD, PLACERVILLE, CA 95667  
TELEPHONE (530) 626-2511 FACSIMILE (530) 626-2514  
EMAIL: droeca@droecdlaw.com

September 22, 2011

El Dorado County Superior Court  
Court Administration  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

Re: New Courthouse in Placerville, El Dorado County

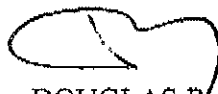
To whom it may concern:

I understand that the Court Facilities Working Group is re-examining which counties are to receive funds to build or revitalize their courthouses. I have been practicing law in El Dorado County for over thirty years, and it seems that for the majority of that time we've been longing for, and on numerous occasions been told, that the funds are to be provided, only to later be informed that the funds went elsewhere.

There is no question that conditions on the western slope of El Dorado County are intolerable. The court is spread out in three separate locations approximately twenty miles apart. This means that for one matter you'll be sitting in a courtroom on Main Street in Placerville, for another in Cameron Park, and another at the El Dorado County government center. The main, historic courthouse in Placerville has outlived its useful life by many years. It is overcrowded, with even the small basement serving as one of the departments. Litigants, including persons going through divorce proceedings, are forced, due to lack of space, to sit or stand in immediate proximity to one another while waiting for the courtroom to open. It lacks secure corridors, and is known to be full of mold and asbestos. None of the three facilities meet current ADA requirements. The inefficiencies in attending hearings at different locations, and the costs incurred in doing so, places a significant burden both on the county, and on clients who deserve better.

I understand this is a political process and that in most instances the money goes to the more powerful counties. However, there have been substantial renovations, and new courthouses, constructed in other small counties, such as Placer and Amador. We have waited much too long. I am hoping that we can convince the Court Facilities Working Group to take a look at the sorry state of our Rube Goldberg courthouse facilities and fund a new, badly needed, courthouse.

Very truly yours,



DOUGLAS R. ROECA

DRR/cnb



**BECKER RUNKLE  
LAURIE MAHONEY & DAY**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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263 Main Street  
Placerville, CA 95667  
(530) 295-6400

David C. Becker

Fax (530)295-6408

September 22, 2011

Justice Brad R. Hill, Chair of the Court Facilities Working Group  
c/o El Dorado County Superior Court  
Court Administration  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

Attn: J. Davenport: (530) 295-2536

Re: El Dorado County Courthouse Construction Priority

Dear Justice Hill and Colleagues:

El Dorado County's need for a consolidated west-slope justice center is critical for many reasons. The top four factors for me are as follows:

A. Significant inefficiencies result from three court sites. The need for litigants, law enforcement, court staff and counsel to attend calendars in different places creates delays from travel and waiting, causes idle time in courtrooms, and makes reassignment very difficult.

B. Our Main Street Courthouse was beautifully built in 1911, but it was never designed to handle the crowds of people seeking justice that swarm it every morning. The basement was built to be our local jail, now it is a courtroom, mediation center, records storage and a home for the court reporters. The second floor was designed to be our County government offices, now it is a family law courtroom and clerks' offices. The top floor was built to provide two courtrooms when that was all we needed. We have band-aided our increasing needs by opening satellite courtrooms, a remote but temporary fix that has now lasted more than 40 years.

C. There is waste and duplication in the support of three courthouses. There is little parking, no places to meet and confer, no security, no separation between calendar types, and no realistic ability to immediately continue a case after a 170.6 challenge or other obstacle to a hearing because continuing a case before a different judge always mandates a resetting to another

location and another date. We need a “down the hall” solution to these delays and obstacles.

D. A Master Calendar trial department would greatly increase our efficiency and avoid dark periods. This improvement can only occur when the calendars and courtrooms are in the same location.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Sent by Email*

Sincerely,

BECKER RUNKLE

LAURIE MAHONEY & DAY

David C. Becker

## LAW OFFICES OF PHYLLIS PENNINGTON

3161 Cameron Park Drive  
Suite 208  
Cameron Park, CA 95682  
(530) 677-7559  
FAX: 677-7711

September 22, 2011

To whom it may concern:

Placerville, El Dorado County desperately needs a new courthouse. We have attempted, without success, to erect a new courthouse to consolidate functions on the West Slope of El Dorado County for over 20 years.

I am a family law attorney who has practiced in the Main Street courthouse for 10 years. This courthouse is 100 years old and is quite small with very inadequate parking. The court house has mold and asbestos issues. The drinking fountain has been turned off because of asbestos, and there is no place to get a drink of water in the courthouse.

There are no meeting rooms for litigants and their attorneys in the most of our court facilities. Attorneys must meet with their clients in the public halls.

There are no holding facilities in three out of four court facilities. In the Main Street courthouse prisoners are taken through the public halls where people are standing or sitting. This poses a significant risk to public safety.

Please consider our county a priority when allocating the funds for courthouse construction.

Very truly yours,



PHYLLIS PENNINGTON  
State Bar #101881  
Treasurer, El Dorado County Bar Association







# EL DORADO COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

550 MAIN STREET, SUITE A, PLACERVILLE CA 95667

*Vision : To provide a forum for our attorneys to continue to learn and network.*

*To provide a forum for members to voice their opinions on local legal issues and elections.*

*To enhance community awareness of our local attorneys by participating in community events and charities.*

## 2010-11 Officers

Rachel Miller  
President  
(530) 621-6401

Todd Jones  
Vice-President  
(530) 621-6732

Peter Tiemann  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President  
(530) 621-2400

Phyllis  
Pennington  
Treasurer  
(530) 677-7559

Susan Hamlin  
Assist. Treasurer  
(916) 939-2086

Mary Schofield  
Secretary  
(530) 626-3092

Clara Yang  
Assist. Secretary  
(530) 642-0881

Kathleen Bailey  
Executive  
Director  
(530) 417-0803

September 21, 2011

El Dorado County Superior Court  
Court Administration  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

RE: New Courthouse project

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the El Dorado County Bar Association. Our association as a whole is very interested and concerned about the new courthouse project. I, myself, am on the planning commission for the project. However, the last planning commission meeting regarding this project was back in November of 2010, and to my knowledge there has been no further communication from the AOC. Our county has attempted, without success, to erect a new courthouse to consolidate its functions on the West Slope of the county for over 20 years. Our current courthouse is nearly 100 years old!

The current operation has resulted in three stand-alone operations existing within less than 20 miles of one another, creating significant inefficiencies in staffing and the delivery of services to court users. By virtue of this space limitation, the court has had to allocate court functions by location, meaning that court users do not have "one stop shopping" for court services. This increases traffic flow and is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources. It also makes it very difficult for attorneys who have multiple court appearances to be in more than one location at a time, causing needless delays and inefficiencies in court time.

The El Dorado County Sheriff has to transport inmates between three separate locations, at significant expense to the taxpayers. The new structure will be in close proximity to the jail site, which will allow the Sheriff to deploy deputies currently assigned to transportation detail to more important law enforcement functions. Not only is transportation a problem for the Sheriff's Department but inmates are transported through public locations in the courthouse, jurors and other members of the public see inmates going to trial in handcuffs and chains. There is no separation between the public and inmates as they ride the public elevator and walk the public halls to the courtrooms. It's a logistical nightmare and it's only a miracle that serious security breaches have not occurred. It's dangerous for the public, for the Sheriff's Department and for the inmates alike, creating a significant risk to public safety, and unnecessarily places victims of and witnesses to crimes in close proximity to the alleged perpetrators.

Our historic Main Street Courthouse has inadequate parking for court users and jurors. There is never enough parking for all the patrons of the courthouse. There is no available parking for jurors near the courthouse and they must be shuttled in from another location at great inconvenience to the jurors and the court, whom must accommodate the

shuttle schedule.

Our historic Main Street Courthouse was built in 1911 and is plagued with mold and asbestos issues, which cannot be adequately resolved.

The movement of juvenile offenders through the public corridors violates the minors' rights to confidential proceedings in court. The waiting facilities for juvenile dependency proceedings forces the parties to intermingle and offers no privacy whatsoever for clients to speak with their attorneys regarding the proceedings. Juvenile delinquency proceedings leave out of custody clients all waiting in the lobby area open to the public, making it obvious that they are waiting for their cases to be called, while adult criminal court proceeds in the other courtroom on the same floor.

We have no holding facilities in three out of four court facilities, and the one that we do have is in a mixed use building with no perimeter security. The size of those holding facilities is inadequate for the number of inmates, resulting in an inordinate number of sheriff's deputies having to move and supervise their activities within the courthouse. This causes numerous delays in dealing with client cases because the Sheriff's Department must transport the inmates over in "waves" because there are sometimes too many inmates to bring over on one calendar. Attorneys are left waiting for hours while other cases are called and room is freed up to bring the next set of inmates.

None of our court facilities have jury assembly rooms or any place for jurors to congregate, meaning that they have to sit in stairwells or stand in limited public lobby space with clients, attorneys, witnesses and law enforcement. There is no privacy and no confidentiality for anyone.

None of our courthouses meet current ADA requirements, exposing the court (and the county, in mixed use buildings) to potential litigation.

There are no meeting rooms for litigants and their attorneys in most of our court facilities, and the one meeting room that is available is clearly overly congested because it's the only one.

Traffic noise at the Main Street Courthouse is significant. Many times the court must stop proceedings as ambulances or emergency personnel drive by with sirens activated. Since the hospital is down the street from the courthouse, this is a frequent occurrence and is incredibly disturbing as it occurs during the middle of trial sessions on a regular basis.

El Dorado County has experienced a massive increase in the number of high profile cases, including cases where the defendant is accused of being a serial killer. The number of murder cases, in particular, have burgeoned. The security risks of transporting

these defendants to court and the exposure to the public is huge and unacceptable. As this county continues to grow and as our crime rate also continues to grow we are slowly approaching a disastrous situation, putting the lives of the public, the sheriff's department, inmates, court staff, and attorneys in harm's way. If the state continues to ignore this problem it will eventually skyrocket out of control and end up costing the state millions of dollars in lawsuits when things go awry.

Please do not continue to place this project on the back burner. It is imperative and necessary that this project continue forward as quickly as possible. The current courthouse conditions are deplorable and completely unacceptable for a state like California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rachel D. Miller, Esq.', with several loops and flourishes.

RACHEL D. MILLER, ESQ.

President, El Dorado County Bar Association





# City of Placerville Office of The Chief of Police

“Partners with the Community”

*George Nielsen*  
*Chief of Police*

September 23, 2011

Court Facility Working Group  
Honorable Brad R. Hill, Chair  
Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal  
Fifth Appellate District

Re: Support for El Dorado New Placerville Courthouse SB 1407 Project

Dear Justice Hill and Court Facility Working Group Members:

I write this letter to you to urge you not to delay or cancel plans for the El Dorado County new Placerville Courthouse project.

Our County has for over 20 years attempted, without success, to erect a new courthouse to consolidate its functions on the West Slope of the county. The current court operation has resulted in three stand-alone operations existing within less than 20 miles of one another, creating significant inefficiencies in both courthouse and peace officer staffing and the delivery of services to court users. Peace officers often must travel between the three court sites rather than be more available on the street to serve the public. By virtue of the space limitation, the court has had to allocate court functions by location, meaning that court users do not have “one stop shopping” for court services. This increases traffic flow and is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources.

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office has to transport inmates between the three separate court locations, at significant expense to tax payers. The new structure will be in close proximity to the jail site, which will allow the Sheriff's Office to deploy deputies currently assigned to transportation details to more important public safety functions.

Our historic Courthouse located right on Main Street in Placerville was built in 1911 and is plagued with mold and asbestos issues, inadequate parking for court users and jurors and it does not have holding facilities or secure corridors for the safe movement of juvenile and adult prisoners. Currently, incarcerated individuals are delivered to courtrooms through public hallways and elevators, creating a significant risk to public safety and unnecessarily placing victims of and witnesses to crimes in close proximity to the alleged perpetrators. The movement of juvenile

730 Main Street Placerville, California 95667 (530) 642-5210 Fax (530) 642-5215  
E-mail: [gnielsen@cityofplacerville.org](mailto:gnielsen@cityofplacerville.org)

offenders through the public corridors probably violates the minors' rights to confidential proceedings in court.

None of the current court facilities have jury assembly rooms or any place for jurors to congregate – The prospective jurors have to sit in stairwells or stand in limited public lobby space. I'm informed that none of our current courthouses meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and there are generally no meeting rooms for litigants and their attorneys.

The population of El Dorado County has increased by approximately four times from 43,833 in 1970 to 181,050 in 2010. In addition, El Dorado County has experienced a massive increase in the number of high profile cases, including cases where defendants have been accused of serial killings, school shooting and child abduction.

It is my understanding that any delay or cancelation of the proposed project may compromise the selected site next to the existing jail facility. This outcome would be most distressing as the proposed site is the absolutely logical site for the efficiencies and accessibility needed for future court operations. This project is desperately needed within our region.

In summary, I am very concerned that a delay in this project at this time may entirely derail the project altogether. I urge the Court Facilities Working Group to recommend that the El Dorado New Placerville Courthouse project not be delayed or canceled, that the Site Acquisition Phase be completed in FY 2012/2013 and the project be moved forward to Preliminary Plan phase immediately.

Most Sincerely,

George Nielsen  
Chief of Police



## City of Placerville Office of The City Manager

September 23, 2011

Court Facility Working Group  
Honorable Brad R. Hill, Chair  
Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal  
Fifth Appellate District

Re: Support for El Dorado New Placerville Courthouse SB 1407 Project

Dear Justice Hill and Court Facility Working Group Members:

I write this letter to you to urge you not to delay or cancel plans for the El Dorado County new Placerville Courthouse project.

For over 20 years El Dorado County has attempted, without success, to erect a new courthouse to consolidate its functions on the West Slope of the county. The current court operation has resulted in three stand-alone operations existing within less than 20 miles of one another, creating significant inefficiencies in both courthouse and peace officer staffing and the delivery of services to court users. This also creates confusion and inefficiencies for court users. Increased traffic flow is caused as users travel between facilities to obtain court services and is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources.

The City of Placerville as the County seat has gained significant economic benefit through the location of the court in our City. Delaying the process at this time could jeopardize the location increasing the possibility of relocating the court outside our City. This would have a significant economic impact on essential City services. Having the court facility located in our City provides jobs and economic vitality to the community. In a separate letter our Police Chief has outlined the advantages the new facility will have on public safety. Providing a safe environment for our residents and users of court services is vital to the success of our city.

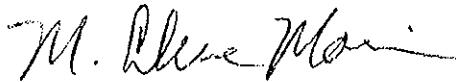
Our historic Courthouse located right on Main Street in Placerville was built in 1911 and is plagued with mold and asbestos issues, inadequate parking for court users and jurors and it does not have holding facilities or secure corridors for the safe movement of juvenile and adult prisoners. Currently, incarcerated individuals are delivered to courtrooms through public hallways and elevators, creating a significant risk to public safety and unnecessarily placing victims of and witnesses to crimes in close proximity to the alleged perpetrators. The movement of juvenile

offenders through the public corridors probably violates the minors' rights to confidential proceedings in court.

The population of El Dorado County has increased by approximately four times from 43,833 in 1970 to 181,050 in 2010. In addition, El Dorado County has experienced a massive increase in the number of high profile cases, including cases where defendants have been accused of serial killings, school shooting and child abduction.

In summary, I encourage you to continue to fund this project in El Dorado County on the current time line to enable us to provide efficient safe facilities for the users of court services. Do not delay this important project so that the project can be completed as planned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Cleve Morris".

M. Cleve Morris  
City Manager



## PLACERVILLE OFFICE

630 Main Street  
Placerville, CA 95667  
Tel: (530) 621 6440  
Fax: (530) 642 9205

Please reply to OFFICE OF  
**THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

EL DORADO COUNTY

RICHARD D. MEYER  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

## LAKE TAHOE OFFICE

1360 Johnson Blvd, #106  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150  
Tel: (530) 573 3115  
Fax: (530) 542 4801

Please reply to 

September 22, 2011

Re: Construction of a New El Dorado County Courthouse: Please Do It!

To Justice Brad R. Hill, Chair of the Court Facilities Working Group,

I understand that construction of a new courthouse in El Dorado County is under consideration. I would like to add my voice to those who are encouraging that project.

I am a criminal defense attorney who has approximately 25 years of experience, and I've worked in 4 California counties. Without question, as compared to the many court's I've appeared in, this county's main courthouse is the least suited to serve the community.

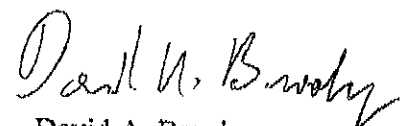
The problems are abundant. There almost no parking available at the downtown court house. The hallways are often jammed with people. Bathrooms are tiny and scary. There is no secure way to transport inmates (they are taken via elevator and walked through the public). There is no holding cell, and no way to interview in custody clients without using a jury deliberation room (presenting confidentiality problems since a Sheriff needs to be very near by.) Courtrooms are down-at-the-heel. The public areas are crowded. The clerk's office has approximately 4 x 6 feet of public space in the room, and often there are 4 people at the counter (with people waiting jamming in and spilling into the hall where they block the metal detector.)

Because of a lack of courtrooms, attorneys travel between Downtown, the County Complex, and Cameron Park. County employees bill mileage for this travel. It is inevitable that an attorney in a co-defendant case is unavailable because they are in a different courthouse on some other case. The arraignment is a waste of gas, resources, and money; but there's nothing to be done about it if there are not enough courtrooms.

The other remote courts are inadequate as well. Cameron Park is tiny, and the County Complex court is in an airless basement that is frequently hot and smelly.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David A. Brooks  
Deputy Public Defender



**El Dorado County  
Public Defender**

630 Main St.

Placerville, CA 95667

Tel: (530) 621-6440

Fax: (530) 6429205

# Memo

**To:** *Jackie Davenport*

**From:** Todd E. Jones – Vice President of the El Dorado County Bar Association

**CC:**

**Date:**

**Re:** Funds for New Court House!!!

---

We have been asked to write a letter in support of designating funds for the court house. Although we have been aware of many justifications for this request, I was unable to "pick just a few" as they all seemed applicable.

Please, consider the following when making any future financial decisions:

- 1) Our county has attempted, without success, to erect a new courthouse to consolidate its functions on the West Slope of the county for over 20 years.
- 2) The current operation has resulted in three stand-alone operations existing within less than 20 miles of one another, creating significant inefficiencies in staffing and the delivery of services to court users. By virtue of this space limitation, the court has had to allocate court functions by location, meaning that court users do not have "one stop shopping" for court services. This increases traffic flow and is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources.
- 3) The El Dorado County Sheriff has to transport inmates between three separate locations, at significant expense to the taxpayers. The new structure will be in close proximity to the jail site, which will allow the Sheriff to deploy deputies currently assigned to transportation detail to more important law enforcement functions.
- 4) Our historic Main Street Courthouse has inadequate parking for court users and jurors.
- 5) Our historic Main Street Courthouse was built in 1911 and is plagued with mold and asbestos issues.
- 6) Our historic Main Street Courthouse does not have holding facilities or secure corridors for the movement of juvenile and adult prisoners, resulting in incarcerated individuals being delivered to courtrooms through public hallways and elevators, creating a significant risk to public safety, and unnecessarily places victims of and witnesses to crimes in close proximity to the alleged perpetrators.

- 7) The movement of juvenile offenders through the public corridors violates the minors' rights to confidential proceedings in court
- 8) We have no holding facilities in three out of four court facilities, and the one that we do have is in a mixed use building with no perimeter security. The size of those holding facilities is inadequate for the number of inmates, resulting in an inordinate number of sheriff's deputies having to move and supervise their activities within the courthouse.
- 9) None of our court facilities have jury assembly rooms or any place for jurors to congregate, meaning that they have to sit in stairwells or stand in limited public lobby space.
- 10) None of our courthouses meet current ADA requirements, exposing the court (and the county, in mixed use buildings) to potential litigation.
- 11) There are no meeting rooms for litigants and their attorneys in most of our court facilities.
- 12) Traffic noise at the Main Street Courthouse is significant.
- 13) El Dorado County has experienced a massive increase in the number of high profile cases, including cases where the defendant is accused of being a serial killer. The number of murder cases, in particular, have burgeoned.

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0004  
(916) 319-2004  
FAX (916) 319-2104

DISTRICT OFFICE  
1700 EUREKA RD., STE. 160  
ROSEVILLE, CA 95661  
(916) 774-4430  
FAX (916) 774-4433

Assembly  
California Legislature



TED GAINES  
ASSEMBLYMAN, FOURTH DISTRICT  
ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN LEADER

COMMITTEES  
BANKING AND FINANCE, VICE CHAIR  
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS,  
TOURISM, AND INTERNET MEDIA  
HEALTH  
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT  
RULES

September 24, 2010

SEP 27 2010

Ms. Tanya Ugrin-Capobianco  
Court Executive Officer  
2850 Fairlane Court, Building C  
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Ms. Ugrin-Capobianco:

**I write to respectfully request that the new Placerville courthouse be constructed at the site adjacent to the existing El Dorado County Jail.**

It is my understanding that the County of El Dorado and the Superior Court of El Dorado have expressed their unified support for the lot adjacent to the El Dorado County Jail as the preferred site for a consolidated courthouse. The May 5, 2006 study phase report agreed that the jail site is the optimal location out of other prospective sites.


This site has been a county build site for the new courthouse for over a decade, which should remove any questions of its viability or possibility of future threats of litigation from neighbors. This location is a shovel-ready project where construction can start immediately, providing necessary jobs and other benefits to the local economy.

Given the current economic hardships facing the state, the County's offer to donate the land to the project will help reduce the project's costs. This location will further save over \$1,000,000 per year in transportation costs associated with transferring prisoners from the jail to the courthouse and back. Building the new courthouse at this location would allow the county to shift all criminal and civil cases there, resulting in reduced caseloads at other locations and a more efficient utilization of staff.

I strongly urge the Project Advisory Group to heed the recommendations of the study phase report and build the new Placerville courthouse adjacent to the county jail.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact either me or my Chief of Staff, Steve Davey, at (916) 319-2004.

Sincerely,

  
TED GAINES  
Assemblyman, 4<sup>th</sup> District





# County of El Dorado

## Chief Administrative Office

330 Fair Lane  
Placerville, CA 95667-4197

Terri Daly  
Chief Administrative Officer

Phone (530) 621-5530  
Fax (530) 295-2537

September 23, 2011

El Dorado County Superior Court  
Attn: Jackie Davenport, Asst. CEO  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear. Ms. Davenport,

In response to your request to provide written input about why the New Placerville Courthouse project should move forward and the implications to the community should the project be delayed or cancelled we offer the following information.

On March 3, 2009, the Judicial Council of California sent a letter to the County of El Dorado soliciting economic opportunities for the proposed New Placerville Courthouse. The County responded back in our letter dated March 30, 2009, offering a piece of County owned property located adjacent to the County Jail facility. This is a prime location for the New Placerville Courthouse as the new Courthouse would be located in the heart of the County of El Dorado. Placerville is the county seat and the property is located in close proximity to the County Government Center as well as the business district. This property is also very close to Highway 50.

The County feels this project is vital to the community as well as efficient business operations for both the Courts and the County. The Courts are currently spread out amongst several buildings on the West slope of the County. This project will consolidate and replace unsafe, substandard, overcrowded and physically deficient court occupied space on the Main Street Courthouse and Building "C" with a much more efficient facility located in the heart of the County of El Dorado. Since the proposed location is adjacent to the County Jail, there are efficiencies in the transportation of inmates and the proposed plan includes much needed safety improvements, both for the Judges and Court's staff, as well as County staff. In addition, consolidation in one location will provide easier access, improved safety and efficiency for jury selection and also for all general public business.

There is significant savings to the State associated with this project. The proposal currently on the table for the acquisition of the land as a donation from the County provides the State the ability to allocate funds in another project area without jeopardizing this project moving forward. In a letter dated September 24, 2010, Assemblyman Ted Gaines provided his endorsement of the project and clearly reiterates many of the reasons why this project should remain on track and not be delayed, or worst case scenario, cancelled.

The County and the AOC have invested significant amounts of time in working on this project. Significant discussion and action points to date include:

- The County has proceeded in good faith to work with an adjacent landowner to secure an additional 2-acre section of property to enhance parking for the Courthouse.
- The County has engaged in discussions with the City of Placerville and the El Dorado County Transportation Commission to find ways to "fast track" improvements that would significantly improve access to the Courthouse. These improvements have been in the County's long range plan for some time; however, the County is willing to make significant efforts to move these projects forward for this purpose.

- The County has provided the AOC with the West Placerville Interchange Environmental Impact Report to assist with their site environmental assessment.
- There is access to public transportation in this area.

The two main buildings that comprise the majority of the Court space on the West Slope are the Main Street Courthouse and Building "C". As you are aware, the recent Garrido Case presented some significant challenges due to courtrooms, locations of the building, access for the Media, safety for the Defendants, etc. The Courts were faced with major parking, space and security constraints in both of their "main" courts facilities, making it extremely difficult to determine how to best manage the court hearings while maintaining security for the Courts, the Defendants, County employees and the public. Building "C" was the venue for the hearings, however, there were significant issues that could have been avoided had a Courthouse such as the one currently proposed been available. There have also been a number of other high profile cases in the County over the past couple of years in which the buildings have been a problem. This case is just one in a list of many where the current court facilities have been woefully inadequate, creating security and inefficiencies for both the Courts and the County. Another issue in Building "C" is that, while the County and the Courts are both government entities, the basic nature of their business provides unrelated services to the public. Both agencies deserve to have their own space to perform their own business.

At this time, the County respectfully requests that this project continue on the time line originally identified. We meet on a monthly basis with the AOC and are closing on several of the negotiation points, moving towards site acquisition.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to ask. We are eager to provide whatever reasonable cooperation we can to see this project move forward.

Sincerely,



Terri Daly  
Chief Administrative Officer

Cc: Board of Supervisors



# COUNTY OF EL DORADO

330 Fair Lane  
Placerville, CA 95667  
(530) 621-5390  
(530) 622-3645 Fax

SUZANNE ALLEN DE SANCHEZ  
Clerk of the Board



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

JOHN R. KNIGHT  
District I  
RAY NUTTING  
District II  
JAMES R. SWEENEY  
District III  
RON BRIGGS  
District IV  
NORMA SANTIAGO  
District V

March 30, 2009

Judicial Council of California  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
Office of Court Construction and Management  
Attn: Burt Hirschfeld, Assistant Division Director  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102-3688

Dear Mr. Hirschfeld:

In response to your letter dated March 3, 2009, El Dorado County is pleased to offer the following economic opportunity for the construction of a new courthouse in Placerville.

**Land Donation:** El Dorado County will provide land for the new courthouse meeting your specifications of between 4.5 and 5.5 acres. The proposed site is within Assessor's Parcel No. 325-300-32 and is adjacent to the existing County jail facility on a hillside immediately south of U.S. Highway 50 on Forni Rd. in Placerville. This location presents the ideal opportunity for the collaboration of County Justice partners by placing the Superior Court in direct proximity to the County jail and Sheriff's offices. As a component of the construction funded by Senate Bill 1407, the County's proposal will allow for the construction of a tunnel from the jail facility to the Superior Court for the secure transfer of inmates. An aerial photo of the general area showing the location of the jail facility and the proximity of U.S. Highway 50 is attached to this letter for your reference.

**Additional details about the proposed courthouse site:** The following summary is provided in response to your request for specific information about the proposed site.<sup>1</sup>

- *Site Context and Location Information:* The proposed site is within the Placerville City limits and is approximately 1.3 miles west of the historic Placerville Central Business District. The proposed site is located across U.S. Highway 50 and southeast

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<sup>1</sup> This information is preliminary and is based on information available in the short period of time allowed for preparing a response.

of the existing County Government Center complex. In addition to the existing County government facilities, the surrounding area includes the County Fairgrounds, rural residences and commercial uses. As highlighted above, the County is offering this site because of its optimal location adjacent to the existing County jail facility and the future benefit of utilizing a secure corridor between the new courthouse and the existing jail.

- *Physical Elements:* The elevation of the site ranges from 1,850 to 2,000 feet above mean sea level and slopes on the site predominantly range between 10 and 20 percent. The site is located with the Weber Creek drainage area and is approximately 1.5 miles from Hangtown Creek. There are no permanent bodies of water on the site. Vegetation on the site is characterized as open grassland and oak woodland.
- *Public Streets and Alleyways:* The site contains existing access by a two lane driveway from Fomi Rd.
- *Subsurface/Geotechnical Conditions:* A prior study described the soils as gravelly and rocky loams with slight to moderate erosion hazards.
- *Seismic Conditions/Requirements:* The County does not have any information about existing seismic conditions or requirement for the proposed site.
- *Energy Conservation/Utilities:* Public utilities, electrical service and telephone service are currently available at the proposed site.
- *Historic Preservation/Site History:* This property does not have any known historical significance and no historical sites have been identified. Prior field reconnaissance identified a site consisting of a cellar and associated rotted wood beams, corrugated iron, a small flat that may have supported a second cabin or barn, a short ditch segment, a small detention basis and a small low rock enclosure. The estimated date of construction is 1900. No other artifacts have been found at the proposed site.
- *Existing Use, Ownership and Control:* The new courthouse would be located on vacant parcels owned by the County that are zoned for use as public facilities.
- *Proximity to County Justice Partners and Community Services:* As noted above, the proposed site is adjacent to the existing County jail facility and is located in close proximity to the County Government Center Complex and Sheriff's Offices, and the Placerville Central Business District.

**Terms:** In exchange for the County's donation of land for the new courthouse, the County seeks to regain the use of all of the space currently occupied or otherwise held by the Superior Court in the Placerville Main Street Branch, Placerville Building C Branch, and El Dorado Center in South Lake Tahoe. Each of these properties holds special value to the County and serves key County purposes. The County proposes that upon completion and occupation of the new courthouse, the Superior Court will vacate these facilities and release or transfer all of its interest in those properties back to the County.

- The Main Street Branch is housed in a historical building at the heart of Placerville's historic Central Business District. Although lacking in modern efficiency, this building is a Placerville icon and local treasure due to its prominence in the center

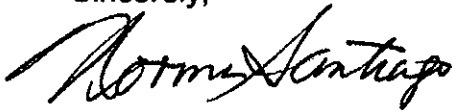
of our community. Once this building is no longer used as a courthouse, it should be reserved for a local purpose in harmony with its community character and distinction.

- The Building C Branch is located in Fair Lane Ct. and is a part of the County Government Center Complex. This building currently houses County departments who share the space with the Superior Court. The County desperately needs this additional space to relieve over-crowded County offices and to provide a home for other county personnel confined to leases that are a strain on the County's exhausted budget.

- The El Dorado Center is distinguished by its commercial value and advantageous location in the business community of South Lake Tahoe. The Superior Court has not made use of this facility for judicial functions in years. The County urgently needs to maximize this public asset. Putting this property back into commercial production will generate much needed revenues to support strapped county operations.

The County is very enthusiastic about the prospect of finally realizing a long-held goal to see the completion of a new courthouse in Placerville. We are eager to cooperate with the State's efforts under Senate Bill 1407 and look forward to the initiation of this much-needed project.

Sincerely,



Norma Santiago, Vice-Chairman  
Board of Supervisors  
County of El Dorado

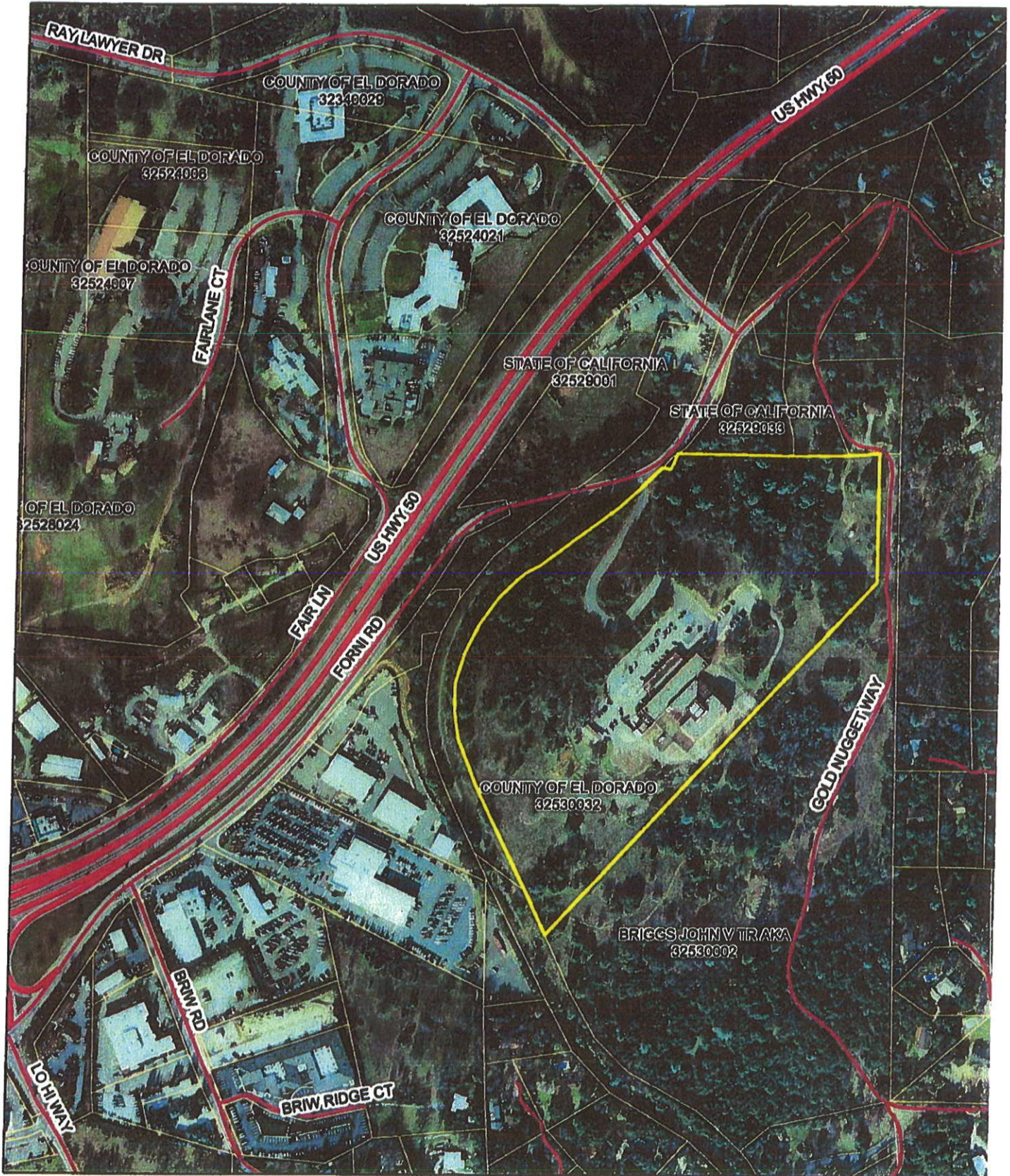
Enclosures

Cc: Hon. Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of El Dorado Co.  
Senator Dave Cox  
Assemblymember Ted Gaines  
Assemblymember Alyson Huber  
Patty Borelli, Placerville City Mayor  
John Driscoll, Placerville City Manager  
Jerry Birdwell, South Lake Tahoe City Mayor  
David Jenkins, South Lake Tahoe City Manager  
Tania Ugrin-Capobianco, Executive Officer, Superior Court of El Dorado Co.  
Steve Sundman, ACO Team Lead, OCCM

Attachment: Aerial photograph (1 page)



# APN 32530032



Disclaimer: This depiction was compiled from unverified public and private sources and is illustrative only. No representation is made as to accuracy of this information. Parcel boundaries are particularly unreliable. Users make use of this depiction at their own risk.

Printed on 3/25/2009 BOS



Map displayed in State Plane Coordinate System (NAD 1983 California Zone 2, feet)

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# City of Placerville

3101 Center Street  
Placerville, California 95667

March 30, 2009

Burt Hirschfeld  
Judicial Council of California  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688

Re: New Placerville Courthouse Project

Dear Mr. Hirschfeld:

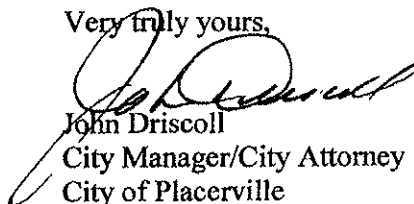
This is in response to your letter dated March 3, 2009, regarding the above-referenced matter. The City of Placerville is pleased to identify a site within the City for the proposed new courthouse. The proposed site is located at 300 Forni Road, and identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 325-300-32. The site consists of approximately 4.5 to 5.5 acres and is adjacent to the existing El Dorado County Jail facility. The site is presently zoned for public facility uses.

As previously indicated, the site is within the Placerville city limits and located very close to the Forni Road/Placerville Drive eastbound off-ramp of U.S. Highway 50. The real property is owned by El Dorado County and has been considered a potential courthouse site for many years. Its proximity to the El Dorado County Jail, as well as the County Government Center, makes it an excellent location for a new courthouse facility in Placerville.

Placerville is the county seat for El Dorado County and, as previously indicated, the site of the El Dorado County Government Center. The City of Placerville has always been the location of the primary courthouse facility for El Dorado County. The site is located in the Placerville Drive business district of the City and is also within approximately one mile of the City's central business district.

It is my understanding that El Dorado County will be providing you with more specific information relating to the site itself, including those matters identified in your letter of March 3, 2009. The City of Placerville, however, wants to express its support for this site for the new Placerville courthouse project.

Very truly yours,

  
John Driscoll  
City Manager/City Attorney  
City of Placerville

JWD:lrn

cc: Jack Sweeney

h:\cmca\hirschfeld,burt.ltr

Finance / Business Licenses 642-5223 • Administration 642-5200 • Community Development Director / Planning 642-5252 • City Clerk 642-5200  
Engineering 642-5250 • Utility Billing / Purchasing 642-5225

Administration Fax 642-5538 • Engineering / Public Works Fax 642-5568 • Building & Planning Fax 295-2510 • Finance 642-5255







**El Dorado County**  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

**LAURA D. ROTH**

DIRECTOR

Phone: 530-642-7363

Cell: 530-306-2207

Fax: 530-295-2584

[laura.roth@edcgov.us](mailto:laura.roth@edcgov.us)

3057 Briw Road, Suite B

Placerville, CA 95667

September 23, 2011

El Dorado County Superior Court  
Tania Ugrin-Capobianco  
Court Executive Officer  
2850 Fairlane Court  
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Ms. Ugrin-Capobiamco:

This letter is in response to your request for our assistance in culminating justification for a new El Dorado Courthouse. My response is intended to include the concerns for the staff and attorneys at the El Dorado County Child Support Services Department, a department I have directed since 2000. Child Support and Family Law hearings are unique in that parties may have the following needs:

- Domestic violence concerns
- Mediation needs
- Custody and visitation issues
- Emotional and sensitive situations

The current El Dorado County Courthouse was built in 1911. Family Law matters were nearly nonexistent at that time, and therefore there are no adequate security protections necessary for domestic violence cases, space for private mediation discussions, rooms for court ordered visitation and/or custody exchanges, nor space for our attorneys to meet with our clients in an attempt to resolve the issues *prior* to taking valuable court time.

Children attend court on a regular basis with their parents as they seek resolution to their child support needs. Currently, in-custody inmates walk through the same walkways our clients are in as they await their court time. Children and families are subject to this dangerous situation and there is literally no way to protect them.

Child Support Services calendars upward of 60 cases on their given court date. This requires the court attendees to fill the hallways as the seating capacity is small within the courtrooms. Locating one of our clients is difficult and requires shouting out their name.

The courtrooms are small and crowded with wires and equipment placed in any open area. This is cause for safety and security concerns.

El Dorado County Superior Court  
September 23, 2011  
Page 2

A meeting room to meet with clients would be beneficial to discuss matters in private and to house Child Support equipment such as a computer and printer to facilitate preparing order after hearings on site.

Please consider the dire needs of El Dorado County Child Support Services in this request for new courtroom space.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laura Roth".

Laura Roth  
Director of Child Support Services

## PETER P. VLAUTIN, III

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Masters of Law (LL.M.) Taxation  
Member California Bar  
Member Nevada Bar

September 23, 2011

Justice Brad R. Hill  
Chair of the Court Facilities Working Group

### RE: **El Dorado County Court House**

Dear Justice:

The El Dorado County Courthouse on Main Street in Placerville, CA. is a disaster waiting to happen. Serious injury or loss of life is inevitable.

I was a Public Defender in Sacramento County for many years prior to practicing in El Dorado County. The movement of inmates in close proximity to the public and a family law courtroom that is not secure from outside intrusions cause me concern every time I enter the Old Courthouse.

In addition the Main Street Courthouse was built in 1911 and contains mold and asbestos.

None of the three court facilities on the west slope of El Dorado County have jury assembly rooms or any place for jurors to congregate, meaning that they have to sit in stairwells or stand in limited public lobby space.

El Dorado County has experienced a significant increase in the number of high profile cases. The number of murder cases, in particular, has increased as well.

I know times are tough and financial resources are limited. Nevertheless, money spent on a new courthouse in El Dorado County would be well spent to ensure the safety of those who participate in our justice system.

Sincerely,

  
Peter Vlautin

