



Judicial Council of California

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PATRICIA GUERRERO

*Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council*

MS. SHELLEY CURRAN

Administrative Director

September 5, 2024

Hon. Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Assembly Bill 3282 (Committee on Judiciary)—Request for Signature

Dear Governor Newsom:

The Judicial Council is pleased to sponsor Assembly Bill 3282 (Committee on Judiciary), which authorizes the council to dispose of three courthouses that are either permanently closed or will be closed upon completion of a new courthouse. The properties include the Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse, the Modesto Main Courthouse/Hall of Records, and the Ceres Superior Court. The bill also adds judicial branch entities to the list of agencies that are eligible to apply for the Golden State Financial Marketplace Program (GS \$Mart). Lastly, the bill also requires the Judicial Council to update the Assembly and Senate Judiciary committees annually between October 1, 2026, and January 1, 2029 regarding remote accessibility of electronic court records by the public.

Senate Bill 1732 (Escutia, Stats. 2002, ch. 1082) transferred responsibility for court facilities from the individual counties to the council. Per existing law, every sale of state-owned real property must be specifically authorized by statute. Previous sales of council property are authorized under Government Code Section 70391 et seq. The language in AB 3282 aligns with existing statutes and specifies the net proceeds are to be deposited into the State Court Facilities Construction Fund (SCFCF) for use in the design, construction, rehabilitation, renovation, replacement etc. of court facilities. Directing any net proceeds to the SCFCF is critical as this fund is facing insolvency. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, "the amount of revenue deposited has steadily declined over time, largely due to declining criminal fine and fee revenue. This has resulted in SCFCF expenditures—such as debt service and facility modifications—routinely exceeding revenues."¹

¹ Legislative Analyst's Office, 2023-24 Budget: Judicial Branch Budget Proposals (pages 8-10).
<https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4673>.

Hon. Gavin Newsom

September 5, 2024

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The Ceres Superior Court was permanently closed in March 2009 and all former operations will be moving to the new courthouse in Modesto and the Modesto Main Courthouse/Hall of Records property will permanently close upon commencing occupancy in the new courthouse in December 2024. The Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse closed permanently in November 2014.

In accordance with existing law and at the request of the affected courts, the council has determined the need to sell the identified properties.

The Judicial Council is committed to access to justice and serving all Californians in an efficient and effective manner. This bill meets that mandate by ensuring the council does not need to expend unnecessary funding, staff time, and mitigation measures for potential safety issues that are commonly associated with vacant buildings. By allowing the council to sell these buildings at fair market value and in alignment with existing law, state funding is appropriately expended where it is needed most—supporting court facilities that are actively in use to improve the court experience for the millions of Californians who access the courts each year.

Including the Judicial Council on the list of eligible applicants for the GS \$Mart program will allow the branch to apply for affordable, non-state funded loans for green energy upgrades and improvements on our existing facilities.

The Judicial Council has worked closely with the Assembly Judiciary committee on language that would address concerns regarding the courts' ability to securely host online portals for public access to civil case records with reasonable, cost-recovery based fees. The requirement in AB 3282 that the council keep the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees updated about the accessibility of these records will provide an opportunity for the council to gather information on these fees and their impact on the public's access to courts records so that the Legislature can then assess how to best address this issue in the future.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council is pleased to sponsor AB 3282.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Morgan Lardizabal at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,



Cory T. Jasperson
Director
Governmental Affairs

CTJ/ML/ad

cc: Hon. Ash Kalra, Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Jith Meganathan, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Shelley Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California



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PATRICIA GUERRERO
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MS. SHELLEY CURRAN
Administrative Director

April 9, 2024

Hon. Ash Kalra
Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee
1020 N Street, Room 104
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Assembly Bill 3282 (Committee on Judiciary), as introduced—Sponsor
Hearing: Assembly Judiciary Committee—April 16, 2024

Dear Assembly Member Kalra:

The Judicial Council is pleased to sponsor Assembly Bill 3282 (Committee on Judiciary), which authorizes the council to dispose of three courthouses that are either permanently closed or will be closed upon completion of a new courthouse. The properties include the Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse, the Modesto Main Courthouse/Hall of Records, and the Ceres Superior Court.

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fine and fee revenue. This has resulted in SCFCF expenditures—such as debt service and facility modifications—routinely exceeding revenues.”¹

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For these reasons, the Judicial Council is pleased to sponsor AB 3282.

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Sincerely,



Cory T. Jaspersen
Director
Governmental Affairs

CTJ/ML/ad

cc: Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Ms. Alison Merrilees, Chief Counsel, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Mr. Daryl Thomas, Consultant, Assembly Republican Office of Policy and Budget
Ms. Jith Meganathan, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor
Ms. Shelley Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California

¹ Legislative Analyst’s Office, 2023-24 Budget: Judicial Branch Budget Proposals (pages 8-10).
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