



## Judicial Council of California

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

770 L Street, Suite 700 • Sacramento, California 95814-3393

Telephone 916-323-3121 • Fax 916-323-4347 • TDD 415-865-4272

RONALD M. GEORGE  
*Chief Justice of California*  
*Chair of the Judicial Council*

WILLIAM C. VICKREY  
*Administrative Director of the Courts*

RONALD G. OVERHOLT  
*Chief Deputy Director*

KATHLEEN T. HOWARD  
*Director, Office of Governmental Affairs*

May 19, 2005

Hon. Carole Migden, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2059  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: SB 395 (Escutia), as amended May 4, 2005 – Sponsor  
Hearing: Senate Appropriations Committee – May 23, 2005

Dear Senator Migden:

The Judicial Council is the sponsor of SB 395, the California Court Facilities Bond Act of 2006.

California's courthouses are in a state of serious disrepair. Of the state's 450 court facilities, 90 percent require significant maintenance, repair, or renovation. Over 80 percent were constructed prior to the 1988 seismic codes, 30 percent are 40 years or older, 23 facilities are in temporary buildings or trailers, and 25 percent do not provide a room to assemble jurors.

Conditions in many of California's courts jeopardize public safety and security, undermine court efficiency, and limit equal access. Examples include:

- **Security**  
Out-of-date building designs contribute to inadequate security at 68 percent of California's courts and increased security costs statewide. In 41 percent of California's courts, in-custody defendants are brought to courtrooms by public hallways and pass by witnesses, jurors, victims, and other court users. As a result, children and victims cannot be separated from perpetrators, jurors come into contact with defendants and witnesses, and defendants may intimidate witnesses.
- **Safety**  
Sixty-eight percent of California's courts lack up-to-date fire and life safety systems. Over half of California's courts pose a substantial seismic risk to court staff and the public. These deficiencies pose an unacceptable risk to court users, employees, and law enforcement.

- **Efficiency**

Twenty-five percent of courtrooms lack the space for a jury box. Many courts lack juror assembly rooms, forcing jurors to wait in public hallways. Existing court facilities are not equipped for current volumes of caseload administration, record archiving, and secure criminal evidence storage. To accommodate population growth over the next 20 years, California will need 5.8 million square feet of additional court space.

- **Access**

More than 75 percent of California's courts do not have adequate access for people with disabilities. Many of California's court facilities lack safe children's waiting rooms. More than 300,000 children come to court each year.

In 2004 the Judicial Council approved the Trial Court Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan, which used a systematic methodology to rank necessary court facility improvements statewide. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) worked in close consultation with court and county personnel to develop the plan, which includes at least one project for every county and will correct all existing facility problems.

Significant financing is necessary to implement this plan. California voters will be asked to approve a courthouse bond measure to provide funding for these projects. The projects represented in the *Plan* were assessed at \$6.2 billion in 2002 dollars; the bond amount to fund all of the projects will necessarily be higher due to inflation and escalating construction costs projected to the time of actual construction over the next ten years. If a bond is passed in 2006, the cost of the top 183 projects with limited judgeship growth, and seismic retrofitting is currently projected to be \$9.8 billion. The amount of the bond to be placed before the voters has not been determined, pending further consideration of state resources and other factors.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council urges your "aye" vote on SB 395.

Sincerely,



Eraina Ortega  
Manager

EO/lb

cc: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Hon. Martha M. Escutia, Member of the Senate  
Lisa Matocq, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Doug Carlile, Consultant, Senate Republican Office of Policy  
Karen Pank, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Sue Blake, Assistant Director of Legislation, Office of Planning and Research



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*Director, Office of Governmental Affairs*

June 22, 2005

Hon. Dave Jones, Chair  
Assembly Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 3126  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: SB 395 (Escutia), as amended May 31, 2005 – Sponsor  
Hearing: Assembly Judiciary Committee – June 28, 2005

Dear Assembly Member Jones:

The Judicial Council is the sponsor of SB 395, the California Court Facilities Bond Act of 2006.

California's courthouses are in a state of serious disrepair. Of the state's 450 court facilities, 90 percent require significant maintenance, repair, or renovation. Over 80 percent were constructed prior to the 1988 seismic codes, 30 percent are 40 years or older, 23 facilities are in temporary buildings or trailers, and 25 percent do not provide a room to assemble jurors.

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- **Safety**  
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- **Efficiency**

Twenty-five percent of courtrooms lack the space for a jury box. Many courts lack juror assembly rooms, forcing jurors to wait in public hallways. Existing court facilities are not equipped for current volumes of caseload administration, record archiving, and secure criminal evidence storage. To accommodate population growth over the next 20 years, California will need 5.8 million square feet of additional court space.

- **Access**

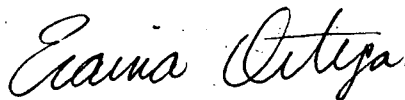
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Significant financing is necessary to implement this plan. California voters will be asked to approve a courthouse bond measure to provide funding for these projects. The projects represented in the *Plan* were assessed at \$6.2 billion in 2002 dollars; the bond amount to fund all of the projects will necessarily be higher due to inflation and escalating construction costs projected to the time of actual construction over the next ten years. If a bond is passed in 2006, the cost of the top 183 projects with limited judgeship growth, and seismic retrofitting is currently projected to be \$9.8 billion. The amount of the bond to be placed before the voters has not been determined, pending further consideration of state resources and other factors.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council urges your "aye" vote on SB 395.

Sincerely,



Eraina Ortega  
Manager

EO/lb

cc: Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee  
Mr. Drew Liebert, Chief Counsel, Assembly Judiciary Committee  
Ms. Karen Pank, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Ms. Sue Blake, Assistant Director of Legislation, Office of Planning and Research



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Director, Office of Governmental Affairs

April 21, 2005

Hon. Joseph L. Dunn, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2080  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: SB 395 (Escutia), as amended April 18, 2005 – Sponsor  
Hearing: Senate Judiciary Committee – April 26, 2005

The Judicial Council is the sponsor of SB 395, the California Court Facilities Bond Act of 2006.

California's courthouses are in a state of serious disrepair. Of the state's 450 court facilities, 90 percent require significant maintenance, repair, or renovation. Over 80 percent were constructed prior to the 1988 seismic codes, 30 percent are 40 years or older, 23 facilities are in temporary buildings or trailers, and 25 percent do not provide a room to assemble jurors.

Conditions in many of California's courts jeopardize public safety and security, undermine court efficiency, and limit equal access. Examples include:

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- **Access**

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In 2004 the Judicial Council approved the Trial Court Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan, which used a systematic methodology to rank necessary court facility improvements statewide. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) worked in close consultation with court and county personnel to develop the plan, which includes at least one project for every county and will correct all existing facility problems.

Significant financing is necessary to implement this plan. California voters will be asked to approve a courthouse bond measure to provide funding for these projects. All bond proceeds will be used in accordance with the Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan. The AOC is currently working to determine the amount necessary for the bond.

California's court buildings will only continue to deteriorate if facilities problems are not addressed now. If improvements are delayed, their scope and cost will increase dramatically, and, as the state population grows, both the public and the justice system will suffer from increasingly overtaxed, unsafe, and inefficient court buildings. A bond will permit the judicial branch to move quickly to correct these significant problems, thus supporting the branch's role as a national leader in innovative court programming and its commitment to equal access for all Californians.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council urges your "aye" vote on SB 395.

Sincerely,



Eraina Ortega  
Manager

EO/lb

cc: Members, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hon. Martha M. Escutia, Member of the Senate  
Karen Pank, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Sue Blake, Assistant Director of Legislation, Office of Planning and Research



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May 19, 2005

Hon. Carole Migden, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2059  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: SB 395 (Escutia), as amended May 4, 2005 – Sponsor  
Hearing: Senate Appropriations Committee – May 23, 2005

Dear Senator Migden:

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For these reasons, the Judicial Council urges your "aye" vote on SB 395.

Sincerely,



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cc: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee  
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