



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: May 12, 2015
TO: House Committee on Revenue
RE: SB 26, relating to patrolling by county law enforcement officials

Chairman Barnhart and members of the committee:

Senate Bill 26 eliminates what is today a January 2, 2016 sunset on the authority granted to seven Oregon counties to transfer federal forest revenue from their Road Funds to their General Fund (so long as that transfer is made specifically for the purposes of proving patrol capacity on roadways with the county). House Revenue has seen various iterations of this bill over the past five sessions. It has always been couched in terms of its usefulness as a tool to assist counties that have been impacted by declining federal forest revenues, and that argument remains valid. Lane County urges the Committee to schedule a work session for this measure and pass it to the floor with a DO PASS recommendation.

Since 2007, Lane County has transferred on average about \$2.5M each year to ensure that our Sheriff's Department maintains a presence in rural Lane County. Here is why we think SB 26 makes good policy:

- The combined permanent rate of the seven counties under this measure is just \$1.07. Each of these counties is now seeking, or has sought in the immediate past, local option levies to provide for additional public safety resources. Of these counties, only Linn County has been successful in passing a measure that provides financial support to the patrol function.
- With the exception of Klamath Counties, each of these counties is on the Secretary of State's "counties to monitor" list after evaluating multiple key indicators of the financial condition of all of Oregon's 36 counties. Of the seven counties, four of them are the state's overall worst four in terms of the Audit Division's review of local revenue per capita and six of the seven exist within the worst 11 counties under that metric.
- As of the writing of this note, the federal Secure Rural Schools Act is eliminated after federal fiscal year 2015, meaning these counties will return to actual harvest revenues in 2016. The uncertainties around actual harvest revenue will make the authority and tool established by SB 26 all the more important in the future.

There are simply exceedingly few revenue tools for funding public safety patrols in these counties and SB 26 provides, at a minimum, a local choice that the governing bodies of these counties. Passage of SB 26 will allow that choice to occur without regularly returning to Salem for additional certainty, or not.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY