

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
BOARD ACTION SUMMARY

DEPT: Chief Executive Office

BOARD AGENDA #: \*B-4

AGENDA DATE: July 19, 2016

**SUBJECT:**

Approval for the Chairman of the Board to Sign a Letter to the Court Facilities Advisory Committee Supporting the Continuation of the Stanislaus County Superior Court New Courthouse Plan

**BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:**

No. 2016-371

On motion of Supervisor Chiesa, Seconded by Supervisor Withrow  
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Chiesa, Withrow, and Chairman Monteith

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: DeMartini

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1)  Approved as recommended

2)  Denied

3)  Approved as amended

4)  Other:

MOTION:

ATTEST:   
ELIZABETH A. KING, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

File No.

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
AGENDA ITEM**

DEPT: Chief Executive Office

BOARD AGENDA #: \*B-4

Urgent  Routine

AGENDA DATE: July 19, 2016

CEO CONCURRENCE:



4/5 Vote Required: Yes  No

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**SUBJECT:**

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Approve the Chairman of the Board to sign the letter to the Court Facilities Advisory Committee supporting the New Courthouse Project in Stanislaus County.

**DISCUSSION:**

On June 28, 2016 the Court Facilities Advisory Committee held a public meeting to review the dire state of the California's court construction fund. According to the news release by the California Courts, during the state's budget crisis approximately \$1.4 billion was taken from the fund to support both the state's General Fund and local trial court operations. The Court Facilities Advisory Committee has been directed to work with the state Department of Finance to recommend what courthouse projects can proceed given the condition of the construction fund.

Stanislaus County Superior Court has been in the planning stage of the project with the expected date to start construction in 2018. With the loss of state funds, the local Stanislaus County Superior Court is worried that there could be a decision to halt the project. The local Stanislaus County Superior Court staff and the community have invested a lot of time and resources in the planning of the new courthouse project.

Attached is a draft letter supporting the continued forward movement of the New Courthouse Project in Stanislaus County.

**POLICY ISSUE:**

As this issue is not part of the Legislative Platform, the Board of Supervisor's approval is needed to sign and send a letter on behalf of the entire Board to the Court Facilities Advisory Committee supporting the New Courthouse Project in Stanislaus County.

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact in approving this Agenda Item.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' PRIORITY:**

Approval of a letter to the Court Facilities Advisory Committee supporting the New Courthouse Plan promotes the Board of Supervisors' priority of Effective Partnership and Efficient Delivery of Public Services.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

The County will use existing staff to process and send the letter to the Court Facilities Advisory Committee.

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Stan Risen, Chief Executive Officer                      209.525.6333

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Draft of Letter to the Court Facilities Advisory Committee



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**William O'Brien**, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
**Vito Chiesa**, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
**Terry Withrow**, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
**Dick Monteith**, 4<sup>th</sup> District  
**Jim DeMartini**, 5<sup>th</sup> District

1010 10th Street, Suite 6500  
Modesto, CA 95354  
Phone: 209.525.4494 Fax: 209.525.4410

July 19, 2016

Court Facilities Advisory Committee  
c/o Judicial Council of California  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Modesto Courthouse in Stanislaus County

Please accept this letter urging the support of continued forward movement for the New Courthouse Project in Stanislaus County. This project has been in some form of planning for more than ten years. A decision to now halt this project would have a devastating effect on our entire community.

Stanislaus County is located in Central California, with an estimated population of 538,000. It is located within 90 minutes of the San Francisco Bay Area. As a low property tax county, Stanislaus County has consistently struggled with high poverty rates (in excess of 22% according to the latest census), high unemployment and significant crime issues. In spite of our fiscal condition, the County made a considerable commitment to restore public safety services to enhance the criminal justice system. It is time for the State to do their part.

The existing main court facility was built in 1939. The building is now the responsibility of the state and, as the committee is aware, the building is constantly under major repair. The courthouse is without holding facilities, appropriate accessibility and even expansion options. The facility does not provide safe conditions for inmates to wait for their time in court. As the crime rate continues to grow as a result of population growth, AB 109 and Proposition 47, more and more inmates need to be transported to the courthouse. The holding areas are in the same proximity as the Judge's Chambers, creating a threatening environment. By putting this project on hold, the Facilities Committee is knowingly placing judges, staff, inmates and public at risk.

While the funding issues that the Court Facilities Advisory Committee are indeed worthy of addressing, please recognize that the halting of this critically needed facility in Stanislaus County is not the solution. It is important to recognize that this project is the lowest cost per square foot project on the list and is both on time and on budget.

The community has also invested considerable time and resources in the planning and procurement of the new Courthouse project. Businesses have already relocated to accommodate the new courthouse facility. The City of Modesto has incurred significant costs to make this project become a reality. Stanislaus County Superior Court is one of the five lowest funded courts in the state without the resources to absorb lease costs or generate other facility options. Without the Judicial Council's commitment to follow through, there simply is no alternative option available.

The Stanislaus Board of Supervisors are concerned about the potential impacts to the Community should the Courthouse project be cancelled or delayed. It is absolutely critical that this project be allowed to continue.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors of Stanislaus County, I urge you to continue to move the Stanislaus County Superior Courthouse Plan forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Monteith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "M".

Dick Monteith, Chairman  
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors