



**Curry County  
Board of Commissioners**

George Rhodes, *Chair*  
David G. Itzen, *Vice Chair*  
Bill Waddle, *Commissioner*

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September 7, 2011

Governor Kitzhaber  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

Curry County is rapidly approaching a state of fiscal distress. There is an immediate possibility that Curry County will not be able to provide a minimum level of public safety services and state mandated services. We estimate that without full reauthorization of federal Secure Rural Schools ("SRS") funding to 2006 levels, Curry County will have a \$362,603 deficit for the 2012-2013 fiscal year and a \$3,120,898 deficit for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Any emergency in Curry County will result in larger deficits occurring earlier than projected.

We are working to resolve this impending economic crisis. To save money in the current fiscal year, we cut our existing departments to the bare minimum. Any further downsizing will result in dysfunctional county services. Such a decision would affect other local government services because Curry County would not be able to adequately assess, collect and process tax payments.

We support a property tax increase. If the voters approved a tax rate increase to \$1.99 per \$1,000 the County could sustain our current minimum level of services without SRS funding. County citizens voted against the last attempt to increase property taxes by a 3:1 margin. We want to change this result for the next initiative. Accordingly, we are informing voters about the county's fiscal situation and the importance of increasing revenue streams. We also are in the process of identifying other long-term funding solutions, including economic development, stewardship programs on federal lands and borrowing funds.

If the voters do not approve a tax increase and Curry County cannot find another solution to its economic situation, we will have no choice but to seek a declaration of a public safety emergency and eliminate most state mandated services.

The dire financial situation of Curry County and other O&C counties should be a top priority during the February special legislative session. Please let us know what we can do to assist your office and the legislature.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Curry County Board of Commissioners



George Rhodes, Chair



David Itzen, Vice Chair



Bill Waddle, Commissioner

cc:

U.S. Senator Jeffery A. Merkley

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden

U.S. Representative Peter A. DeFazio

State Senator Jeff Kruse

State Representative Wayne Krieger