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February 14, 2019

Representative Jennifer Williamson  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
Salem, OR

CC: Senator Tim Knopp, Representative Cheri Helt, Representative Jack Zika

RE: HB 2239 – Increasing the number of Circuit Court judges in certain judicial districts

Chair Williamson and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Bend Chamber of Commerce supports HB 2239. Deschutes County is greatly and adversely impacted by the deficit of judges in our county, which cause delays to our local judiciary processes and gaps in services and due process to our families and businesses alike.

Deschutes County continues to be the fastest growing county in Oregon, as it has for the past decade, yet the number of Circuit Court judges in the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has fallen behind our rapid growth. Our population has increased **45 percent** since the last judge was added in 2003. Adding an additional judge to the 11th District would improve outcomes and meet time standards in juvenile dependency cases, reduce the backlog and time to trial in criminal cases (currently being set six months out), and help reduce the substantial civil docket that (unfortunately) often comes with economic growth.

Deschutes County is one of the most under-resourced courts in the state. We trail in both judges and staff. A recommendation from the 2015 Oregon Circuit Court Judicial Officer Workload Assessment Study estimated that our county required 2.6 additional judges and more than 10 additional staff to accommodate our population gain.

We are grateful for the dedication of our court staff and judges, including their successful efforts to improve the resolution processes child custody cases, and their continued dedication to find appropriate efficiencies. But our need for additional judges and staff has far outpaced any efficiencies and reasonable stretching of the District's finite resources.

We urge you to successfully move HB 2239 out of committee and to the floor for a vote. Thank you for your service and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Katy Brooks, CEO