

Senator Jason Atkinson *Senate District 2*
Representative Ron Maurer *House District 3*
Representative Dennis Richardson *House District 4*



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NEWS RELEASE

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Josephine County Legislators Push for O & C funding

SALEM—State Legislators from Josephine County today joined with County Commissioner Jim Raffenburg and County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson in expressing concern over the loss of O and C funding.

Commissioner Raffenburg and Sheriff Gilbertson testified at the Capitol today to the House Committee on Agricultural and Natural Resources regarding the devastating effect the loss of funding will have on Josephine County. The committee heard testimony regarding House Joint Memorial 5 which urges Congress to restore O & C funding. Josephine County's largest revenue source is O & C funding which accounted for 39% of their budget in 2005-2006.

"The loss of O & C funding to Oregon's counties is a devastating blow to public safety and education," stated Representative Dennis Richardson, "I join my colleagues from Josephine County in urging Congress to restore this vital funding for our communities."

Representative Ron Maurer who sits on the Committee stated his support for the memorial: "The loss of O & C funding is fundamentally the most important issue that Josephine County has encountered since the Iron Curtain descended around our public timberlands. Loss of this funding will have a devastating impact on Southern Oregon."

Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, Senator Jason Atkinson concurred, "Federal mandates have damaged the timber industry and now cutting federal funding on O & C payments will close libraries, cut services to our most vulnerable, and further erode our public safety coverage. We must do everything within our power to insure Oregon remains a state of 36 counties and that our Southern Oregon is still a home for our citizens."

"I call upon the State Legislators for assistance facing this financial disaster, and take an active role in protecting the citizens of Oregon through new legislation," Commissioner Gilbertson testified, "Without these Federal funds, our County law enforcement will be reduced to one patrol vehicle, serving two ten hour shifts and only responding to life-threatening calls. Our 262-bed jail will be limited to holding only 20-30 of the most dangerous prisoners. These are hardly the tools necessary to provide meaningful safety."

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