

## Deschutes County 2016 Legislative Session Summary

### Overview

The 2016 Oregon Legislature convened on February 1, 2016 and adjourned on March 3, 2016. Since voter approval in 2010, sessions now take place annually, with short sessions occurring in even-numbered years and long sessions in odd-numbered years. This year's session took place over the course of 32 days, slightly fewer than the constitutionally-allowed 35 days in an even-numbered year.

The 2016 session seemed particularly challenging as several complex and far-reaching bills were introduced with a limited timeframe in which to consider a full range of potential impacts. Examples of topics addressed included an increase to the minimum wage, affordable housing, marijuana regulation, climate change, and taxation. In reaction, many legislators employed procedural tactics to slow down the session's progress, such as requiring that the text of proposed bills be read in full and absenting themselves from floor votes.

### Outcomes

Deschutes County monitored a total of 73 bills. Notable topics included marijuana regulation, affordable housing, land use, tobacco and nicotine use, health care systems, veterans' benefits, and natural resources. Of the 73 bills tracked, the County supported 23, opposed 6, and was neutral on 43. One bill was assigned a priority 1, 21 bills were assigned a priority 2, and 51 a priority 3. Bills initially assigned a priority 4 were not monitored and are not included in this summary.

The following table shows the results of bills tracked within each of these categories:

County Position/Priority	Passed			Failed		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Support	1	4	8	0	7	4
Oppose	0	0	1	0	1	4
Neutral	0	5	16	0	4	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>35</b>			<b>38</b>	

For more detailed information, including actions, votes, dates, and outcomes on specific bills, please reference the attached bill list.

### Successes

Deschutes County Commissioners and Community Development Department staff spent significant time and effort advocating for legislation that would allow local governments to govern marijuana production. Initially, no legislation was introduced that addressed this issue. However, Senate Bill 1598, which originally focused only on licensing and penalties for marijuana businesses, was ultimately amended to allow cities and counties to enact reasonable regulations as to time, place, and manner of marijuana grow operations.

## Process

In October of 2015, Deschutes County issued a Request for Proposals to provide lobbying services. Three proposals were received by the due date of November 6, 2015. Subsequently, the Board of Commissioners decided to postpone making a decision to better determine the scope of services required. As a result, County Commissioners and staff, with the assistance of the Association of Counties and departmental professional organizations, identified, monitored, and took action on bills of interest during the short 2016 legislative session without the assistance of a lobbying firm.

A full spectrum of desired services was outlined within the scope of work section of the Request for Proposals document, including:

1. Act as Deschutes County's representative to the Oregon State Legislature and lobby on behalf of the County on topics including, but not limited to: Land use laws and regulations, health and behavioral health programs, natural resource management, community and economic development, roads and transportation, law enforcement, adult and juvenile justice, community corrections, and employee and workplace management.
2. Facilitate a process to identify and prioritize bills introduced during the annual legislative session which may be of interest to the County and which may require active lobbying on the County's behalf.
3. Monitor and track proposed legislation, programs, and proposals of interest to the County. Furnish written reports regarding the status of such on a regular basis.
4. Work directly with state legislators and staff, the governor's office, public officials and state agencies, special interest and industry groups, local governments, the Association of Counties, and other professional organizations to develop support for or opposition to proposed legislation, funding, policy, and regulatory decisions that may affect the County.
5. Coordinate and facilitate weekly or bi-weekly meetings held remotely between the Board of Commissioners and Deschutes County's local legislative delegation throughout each annual legislative session.
6. Review periodic revenue forecasts and the proposed biennial state budget and alert the County to opportunities and obstacles. Identify funding opportunities and assess program requirements and guidelines.
7. Provide introductions to individual legislators, and arrange meetings, manage logistics, and prepare County officials for interaction with legislators, legislative staff, committees, interim work groups, and other public officials.
8. Assist in preparing position papers, exhibits, testimony, correspondence, proposed bill text and amendments as necessary.
9. Advise and assist County officials with planning, preparing, and implementing legislative strategies to accomplish the County's goals and objectives and with preparing proposed legislation to be introduced during the session.
10. Support partnerships between Deschutes County and other Central Oregon agencies and groups, including the Central Oregon Cities Organization, Cities of Bend, La Pine, Redmond, and Sisters, local Chambers of Commerce, special districts, and other entities actively pursuing a legislative agenda which may have elements in common with the County.
11. Prepare and submit quarterly lobbying expenditure reports on behalf of Deschutes County Commissioners, the County Administrator, and other staff as required.

The Department of Administrative Services assigned a Management Analyst and Administrative Assistant to perform many of the duties described above. The Department also hired temporary office staff to assist with many of the Administrative Assistant's regular responsibilities during the duration of the session. To a greater or lesser extent, this allowed the County to manage activities #2, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 11 above.

The Administrative Assistant set up the tracking system using software provided at no charge by the Association of Counties and updated the information on a weekly basis. She also arranged and supported the weekly meetings with the Central Oregon legislative delegation. These tasks took approximately 16 hours per week prior to and early in the session and approximately 10 hours per week thereafter.

On average, the Management Analyst dedicated between 16 and 20 hours per week on legislative functions. She identified bills of possible interest to the County, facilitated the process of assigning positions and priorities, and prepared and distributed status reports weekly. She also monitored proposed legislation and legislative progress in the Oregon Legislative Information System, assisted with the preparation and distribution of written testimony and letters of support/opposition, and communicated with County partners to assess common bills of interest.

Activities #1, 4, and 7 in the list above primarily became the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners and Department Directors, with assistance from the Association of Counties and professional organizations. Activity #11 was performed by the County Clerk. Activity #6 was not addressed during the 2016 session and activity #9, if performed, will take place during the interim.

Missing from this process was a consistent physical presence in the Capitol throughout the session to proactively gather and communicate to the County information regarding the likelihood of legislation passing or failing; facilitate relationships between the County and legislative delegates from outside Central Oregon; organize visits to the Capitol by County Commissioners and staff; determine which legislators were in support of or in opposition to particular bills; and analyze budget and revenue impacts. However, the Association of Counties performed many of these functions on the County's behalf.

On April 13, 2016, Department of Administrative Services staff will facilitate a Board discussion concerning the outcome of County's 2016 legislative process and decision-making regarding how to proceed for the 2017 session.