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## **Two Sites Approved for El Centro Family Courthouse**

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) today approved selection of the second of two potential sites for the proposed new family courthouse in El Centro. Both sites are privately owned and in the same general area, near Wake Avenue between South Clark Road and South Fourth Street, midway between the county courthouse and juvenile hall. The site approved today fronts on Wake Avenue. A second site, approved in January, fronts on Thomas Lane.

These two sites were selected after a lengthy process during which more than a dozen potential sites were considered, including two owned by the Imperial County Office of Education and the County of Imperial, both located near the jail. The two jail-adjacent sites were evaluated in detail. Ultimately, the AOC, the county, and the project advisory group decided not to pursue these sites because of the cost of the infrastructure (including water, sewer, and road improvements) that would have been required.

Site selection approval enables the state Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which is managing the project, to undertake further due diligence and negotiations that will ultimately result in selection of the final site, expected by midyear. Final site selection will be validated by the Superior Court of Imperial County and the project advisory group. Site acquisition, which also requires SPWB approval, is expected to be completed later this year, after which architectural design can proceed. The Southern California architecture firm of Safdie Rabines has been selected to design the new courthouse.

The new courthouse will house four courtrooms and will consolidate all family and juvenile court functions in one location. Currently the Superior Court of Imperial County provides family and juvenile court functions in two facilities, which creates operational deficiencies and is a detriment to the administration of justice for the public and court staff.

The new courthouse project, with an estimated total cost of \$58.7 million, is among 41 projects to be funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties, and assessments. These projects do not draw from the state's General Fund.

More about the project may be found on the California Courts website at [www.courts.ca.gov/2797.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/2797.htm).

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