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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Court Facilities Working Group Recommends Requesting Funding for All Courthouse Projects**

*Judicial branch to advocate for court construction funding restoration*

SAN FRANCISCO—The [Court Facilities Working Group](#) voted February 8 to recommend to the Judicial Council that funding be requested of the Legislature so that all active courthouse projects could proceed in the upcoming fiscal year, rather than placing more projects on hold due to uncertainties in the budget. [The plan](#) is contingent on restoration of construction funds as a part of finalization of the Budget Act for fiscal year 2013–2014. Without funding restoration, 11 urgently needed projects will not be able to move forward as scheduled.

“We understand the fiscal realities of our state,” said Justice Brad R. Hill, chair of the Court Facilities Working Group and Administrative Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District. “We must be very prudent and extremely careful when spending the public’s money. We have spent many hours reviewing each and every project and cutting millions of dollars out of construction budgets, saving more than \$115 million to date. We also believe that the public deserves safe, secure, accessible courthouses. Millions of Californians use our courthouses. They deserve courthouses that will not collapse in an earthquake. They deserve courthouses that are safe, and security experts tell us that our citizens are at risk if we don’t do something about these deficiencies. Further delay will imperil our vital infrastructure and compromise the safety of those citizens who use our courts.”

By fiscal year 2013–2014, nearly \$1.5 billion of court user fees originally designated by the Legislature to be set aside for court construction will have been borrowed, transferred to the state General Fund, or redirected to court operations. The Governor’s proposed budget would redirect another \$200 million in court construction funds to trial court operations. It also postpones repayment of a \$90 million loan from the court construction fund. These reductions would leave very limited funds to move projects forward in the upcoming fiscal year. In the last fourteen months, two projects have been canceled, seven have been delayed indefinitely, and at its December meeting, the Judicial Council [adopted a plan](#) to shelve four more projects pending resolution of the Budget Act for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Judicial Council is expected to consider the recommendations at its meeting February 26, 2013.

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*The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.*