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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

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December 18, 2024

Mr. Joe Stephenshaw, Director
Department of Finance
1021 O Street, Suite 3110
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Stephenshaw:

In a letter dated November 26, 2024, you notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC), pursuant to Control Section 6.00 in the *Budget Act of 2024*, of a request from the Judicial Council to redirect \$1.76 million originally appropriated for facility maintenance to a capital outlay project for the demolition of the Los Angeles Mental Health Courthouse.

The vacant courthouse was severely damaged by fire in September 2024 and is at risk of collapse. Despite being “red tagged” by the City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety and barricaded with fencing, individuals continue to trespass onto the property. According to the Judicial Council, until the damaged facility is demolished, the property poses a serious threat to life and safety and is a significant liability to the state. I find it reasonable to address the issue immediately.

However, legislative budget staff and the Legislative Analyst’s Office inform me that the Judicial Council already executed a contract with a vendor to demolish the courthouse. Although work has been temporarily suspended until JLBC completes its review, DOJ issues its approval, and the funds become available, executing a contract prior to JLBC review circumvents the Legislature’s oversight of state spending established in Control Section 6.00. Accordingly, the Judicial Council should coordinate with your office to ensure that future contracts are executed only after appropriate JLBC review has occurred.

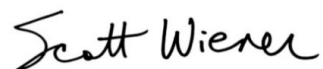
Mr. Joe Stephenshaw

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In conclusion, I concur with the redirection of funds and approve your request to waive the remainder of the 30-day review period, in order to allow the demolition to begin as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Wiener". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott Wiener
Chair

cc: Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee