

2021 Legislative Concept Proposal LC 591 - Lake County Boundary Change

Problem

The Commission was petitioned by residents of the northernmost portion of Lake County to be removed from the Central Oregon Community College Service District and become unincorporated. Through an extensive process that included multiple public hearings and conversations with the petitioners, local education leaders, county commissioners, Central Oregon Community College, and Klamath Community College, the Commission passed an order in December 2019 to transition the territory into the KCC district. This order requires legislative approval before taking effect.

Background

The Commission, pursuant to ORS 341.575 to 341.579, serves as the Community College District Boundary Board, authorized to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly regarding the inclusion or exclusion of territory in a particular district, and conduct elections to resolve questions of annexation or succession on its own motion or through the receipt of a remonstrance petition.

Public hearings and the broader investigation and stakeholder engagement process support the transition of the concerned territory from COCC to KCC. Particularly, the process resulted in several key findings:

- The territory is currently being served by distance learning technology offered by KCC
- Residents present at the hearing believe KCC offers programming that is more aligned with the educational needs of the territory than that offered by COCC
- Lake County has a current contractual relationship with KCC and the Lakeview ESD has a positive relationship with KCC
- COCC does not have current plans to increase or improve educational services provided by COCC to the territory
- The current district boundaries are not aligned with the current contracts, relationships, and interests of the territory or broader Lake County
- The administrations of both COCC and KCC support the transition of the territory
- The COCC Board of Directors has taken formal action to support the transition
- The majority of residents present at the hearings supported the transition of the territory
- The tax liability of residents of the territory will decrease, as the KCC mill rate is currently lower than the COCC mill rate, without any loss in educational services

Proposed Solution

The legislature is required to approve the Commission's order. In 2020, the legislature passed the order out of the House Education Committee and the House floor unanimously, prior to the failure of the legislature to achieve a quorum.

The Commission seeks expedited passage of this bill. If the bill is signed before March 31, 2021, the Order will take effect at the beginning of July 2020, otherwise the boundary change will take one additional year to be effectuated.