



Director's Message

Feb. 1, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Today Governor Kitzhaber released the Governor's Balanced Budget for 2011-2013. As expected, this budget makes significant cuts to many state agency programs to align services with revenue limitations. The Governor's goal is to create an efficient, effective and sustainable state government for Oregonians.

Core to the Governor's recommended budget for OYA is a reduction of this agency's close-custody capacity by 47 percent, from the current 887-bed level to a proposed 475-bed level. Achieving this reduction will require deep cuts at OYA.

During his presentation, however, Governor Kitzhaber acknowledged this may be too severe of a reduction, and that budgetary "addbacks" may need to be considered. While addbacks may alleviate some of the reductions necessary, we know we still will need to make some level of close-custody capacity reduction and will need to lay off staff.

This is a difficult situation and one that we deeply wish could be avoided. However, we have known some level of budget reductions were coming for many months. In expectation of reduced funding for the 2011-2013 biennium, we have been reviewing agency operations to determine how to more efficiently and cost-effectively deliver core services, shift resources and implement program changes.

We have mentioned in earlier messages the mapping initiative, staffing and overtime initiatives, and other processes under way that we intend to implement during the next few months. These service delivery improvements will achieve savings we hope will lessen to some degree the required bed reductions and staff layoffs, and will enable you to continue to do the best job possible of reforming youth and preserving public safety.

We also have completed development of an assessment tool called the OYA Recidivism Risk Assessment (ORRA). This tool will be used to help OYA and county juvenile departments determine which youth offenders can be released with the least risk to the community.

It is too soon to comment specifically on how we will implement the budget; we're still reviewing the budget details that were released today, and we anticipate continued conversations that may alter the final budget allocation. We will be working with the Governor, Legislature, counties, courts and other partners during the next few months to find ways to

achieve positive outcomes for Oregon's youth while operating within the new, lower funding levels.

And while we support the Governor's Balanced Budget and will work toward implementation, we also will continue to advocate on behalf of OYA to ensure our partners and the public understand the importance of the services you provide and the good work you do. We know this is a difficult time for everyone, and it is important to remember that this budget in no way reflects the value of this agency or of you; this is a result of the ongoing severe economic issues facing this state.

We also realize you would like to know as many details as possible so that you can know what to expect. We will keep you informed as we move forward, and will share more information with you when it is available.

In the meantime, we thank you for your continuing work to serve Oregon's youth offenders and protect the public's safety. You are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colette S. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Colette S. Peters
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fariborz Pakseresht". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Fariborz Pakseresht
Deputy Director

INTEGRITY * PROFESSIONALISM
*** ACCOUNTABILITY * RESPECT ***