



NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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Contact: Karen Redmond

Courthouse Construction Delays Hurt Judiciary

Many of the Judiciary's courthouses are aging, overcrowded, and security hazards, and delays in funding new projects are causing significant construction cost increases a representative of the Judicial Conference told a Senate Subcommittee today. To meet the Judiciary's needs, Judge Jane Roth (3rd Cir.), chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Security and Facilities, asked the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure to authorize or increase authorizations for 20 projects in fiscal year 2002.

"Ten years ago, the Judiciary, Congress, and the GSA (General Services Administration) embarked on a construction program to replace court facilities," Judge Roth told the subcommittee. "Some existing courthouses are at full capacity with no room for expansion. Most are aged and obsolete, cannot provide adequate security, and cannot accommodate emerging technology." But because the former Administration did not include funding for courthouses in fiscal years 1998 through 2000, and Congress has appropriated funds for construction only twice in the last four years, a serious construction backlog now exists.

Meanwhile the workload of the federal courts continues to grow. Judge Roth cited statistics that show criminal cases in the federal courts have increased 32 percent, civil cases have increased 20 percent, and bankruptcy filings have increased 68 percent over the last 10 years. Nineteen new Article III judgeships have been added in that time, and the Judicial Conference is requesting 54 more be created. Furthermore, about 127,000 persons are under supervision of the Judiciary's probation and pretrial services officers.

"A courthouse project is not proposed for consideration unless the district's long-range facility plan indicates that there is no more room for judges in the existing facility," said Judge Roth. "Usually this determination is made after all executive branch agencies and court-

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related units have been moved from the existing building. Therefore, the projects on the Judiciary's Five-Year Plan are urgently needed when they are placed on the plan and delays only exacerbate operational problems." Judge Roth told the subcommittee that these problems are particularly acute along the southwest border, where workloads have more than doubled, and where three of the 20 courthouse projects requested for FY 2002 are located.

The Administration's FY 2002 budget contains \$216.8 million in funding for twelve new construction projects. The Senate has already provided authorizations for eleven of these projects, although these authorizations now may need to be increased for inflation. The Judicial Conference proposes 20 projects for funding in FY 2002 at a total cost of approximately \$665 million. A list of the 20 courthouse projects is attached.

Judge Roth also detailed the Judiciary's and GSA's efforts to economize and ensure better management of the courthouse construction program, including a long-range facilities planning process for which the Judiciary received GSA's Annual Achievement Award for Real Property Innovation in 1998; a benchmarking process to evaluate the cost of proposed new projects and identify potential savings; the U.S. Courts Design Guide; and a scoring system that produces a prioritized Five-Year Courthouse Project Plan.

"Improvements made to the planning process and design standards over the years help to ensure that the courthouse program meets the Judiciary's workload needs in an economical and functional manner," Judge Roth told the subcommittee. "Therefore the Judiciary asks that you authorize, in accordance with the Judiciary's stated needs, the new courthouse projects that have not already been authorized or that need their authorizations increased."

For Judge Roth's complete testimony, visit the Judiciary's website at www.uscourts.gov.

Judicial Branch Courthouse Construction Program for FY 2002

(Dollars in Millions)

Project (In Priority Order Approved by Judicial Conference)	Project Phase on Judiciary's Plan	Amount Recommended by the Judiciary in FY 2002	Amount Requested in President's Budget
<u>(From Previous Plans)</u>			
Brooklyn, NY	Design & Construct	\$32.000	\$3.361*
Washington, DC	Construction	6.595	6.595
Buffalo, NY	Site & Design	0.716	0.716
Springfield, MA	Design & Construct	6.473	6.473
Miami, FL	Construction	15.000	0
<u>(On FY 2002 Plan)</u>			
1. Fresno, CA	Construction	\$121.2	\$121.225
2. Erie, PA	Construction	30.7	30.739
3. Eugene, OR	Construction	75.2	4.470 **
4. El Paso, TX	Site & Design	11.1	11.193
5. Mobile, AL	Site & Design	11.3	11.290
6. Norfolk, VA	Site & Design	11.8	11.609
7. Las Cruces, NM	Design	4.1	4.110
8. Salt Lake City, UT	Construction	76.5	0 ***
9. Little Rock, AR	Design & Construct	75.0	5.022 **
10. Rockford, IL	Site & Design	4.9	0
11. Cedar Rapids, IA	Site & Design	15.1	0
12. Nashville, TN	Site & Design	14.3	0
13. Savannah, GA	Construction	46.5	0
14. Fort Pierce, FL	Site & Design	4.5	0
15. Jackson, MS	Site & Design	12.3	0
16. Austin, TX	Site & Design	8.5	0
17. San Diego, CA	Design	14.3	0
18. Cape Girardeau, MO	Construction	36.9	0 ***
19. Orlando, FL	Construction	71.3	0 ***
20. San Jose, CA	Site & Design	19.4	0

* Only a portion of this money is for the new courthouse annex, with the remainder to be spent on design of U.S. Attorney space in the General Post Office. GSA's prospectus does not specify how the funding request is to be divided.

** These funds are for additional site and/or design only and do not include construction money as planned. A prolonged site selection process for the Eugene project and a change in design plans for the Little Rock project resulted in their not being ready for construction in FY 2002.

*** GSA indicates these projects may not be ready for any additional funding in FY 2002.