



To: Oregon Attorney General Task Force on Public Records
From: Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association
Re: Recommendations for Public Records Legislation

After consideration by the ONPA Legislative Committee and Board of Directors, we would like to offer these recommendations to the AG Task Force related to possible public records legislation.

- 1) Public Agency Response Time: We prefer a limit of 5 business days for public bodies to provide requested records or provide an estimate of when the records will be available. We can live the proposal that allows up to 5 business days for public bodies to acknowledge a records request, and up to 10 business days to provide records or provide a reasonable estimate of when records will be available. Language allowing limited exemption from those timelines should be carefully crafted to apply only for complex requests, or when a public body reasonably lacks staff availability to respond within the timeline.
- 2) Cataloguing Exemptions: We support the proposal for statutory direction to the AG Office to catalogue public records exemptions.
- 3) Streamlining Exemptions: We favor stand-alone legislation proposing to “streamline” public records exemptions in ways discussed by the Task Force, hoping it can become a model for future efforts to eliminate inconsistencies, redundancies and contradictions among Oregon’s 500-plus public records exemptions.
- 4) Ombudsman’s Office: Recognizing that this issue may fall to the Governor’s Office, we recommend AG Task Force encouragement for creation of this role as an independent office with meaningful legal roles in education, negotiation, mediation and legal opinions. We would like to have opportunity for input into definitions of those roles as relates to records requests and appeals.
- 5) Fees for Records Requests: We believe that consideration of laws and legal interpretations related to public record fees is a hugely important issue that the AG Task Force should consider for recommendations to the 2017 Legislative Session.

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