

**WHATCOM COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**
Whatcom County Courthouse
311 Grand Ave, Suite 108
Bellingham, WA 98225-4083



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ROB NEY
Facilities Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive

FROM: Rob Ney, Facilities Director
Hans Howard, Special Projects Manager

RE: Contract – 3rd Floor Courtroom 5C State Commerce Grant

DATE: October 24th, 2025

Attached for your review and signature is the original Contract between Whatcom County and the Department of Commerce, for the purpose of accepting grant funds in the amount of \$1,212,500.00 for the following:

- The reconstruction of conference rooms on fifth floor of courthouse to create new courtroom for new water commissioner and office space for associated staff. This project is located at 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham WA 98225.
- The acquisition and adaptation of office space to move Whatcom County's Information Technology Division from the third floor of the courthouse to a separate building. This acquisition is located at 400 N Commercial Street Bellingham WA 98225.
- Reconstruction of former Information Technology Division space on third floor of courthouse to accommodate new superior court judge and staff. This project is located at 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham WA 98225.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

In 2019, the Legislature funded a Department of Ecology assessment of the statewide need for water rights adjudication, and Ecology identified the Nooksack Basin (Water Rights Inventory Area 1) as a top priority area. As recommended in this report, the Legislature provided funding to the Department of Ecology for the adjudication to be filed. Per RCW 90.03.243, the State is obligated to provide for the County's extraordinary costs imposed due to adjudication. For Whatcom County, a significant portion of these costs are associated with the provision of courtroom and office space for staff dedicated to water adjudication. Without support for facilities costs, the County will be unable to create or maintain physical space for the staff and Superior Court judge allocated to the adjudication.

The Department of Commerce appropriated \$1,250,000.00 from the 2025-27 State Capital Budget for the Nooksack Water Adjudication Facility Needs Project. The Department of Commerce, which will administer the project, will retain three percent (up to a maximum of \$50,000.00) to cover their administrative costs. Accordingly, the net grant award is \$1,212,500.00.

Project Scope:

This project has three components:

- The reconstruction of conference rooms on fifth floor of courthouse to create new courtroom for new water commissioner and office space for associated staff.
- The acquisition and adaptation of office space to move Whatcom County's Information Technology Division from the third floor of the courthouse to a separate building.
- Reconstruction of former Information Technology Division space on third floor of courthouse to accommodate new superior court judge and staff.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

The Department of Commerce has awarded a net grant of \$1,212,500.00 toward the scopes described above.

▪ **Differences from Previous Contract**

This project is a one-time agreement.

Please contact Rob Ney at extension 5365, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.

Enclosures