March 6, 2013

The Honorable Jeff Barker  The Honorable Chris Garrett  The Honorable Wayne Krieger
Chair Vice-Chair Vice-Chair
House Committee On Judiciary House Committee On Judiciary House Committee On Judiciary
900 Court St. NE, H-480 900 Court St. NE, H-283 900 Court St. NE, H-381
Salem, OR 97301 Salem, OR 97301 Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2944

Dear Chair Barker, Vice-Chair Garrett, and Vice-Chair Krieger:

I write on behalf of Western Pacific Chapter (WestPac) of the American Association of Law Libraries in support of HB 2944, an Act Relating to Electronic Legal Material. I strongly urge the Committee on Judiciary to approve HB 2944, which will enact the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA) and provide Oregon with a technology-neutral, outcomes-based approach to ensuring that online state legal material deemed official will be preserved and made permanently available to the public in unaltered form.

WestPac represents comprised of over 200 people associated with academic, federal, state, county, court, firm, and other private law libraries in the Western United States, Canada, and the Pacific. Oregon law librarians from the state law library, county law libraries, law school libraries and others are WestPac members. WestPac was founded in 1967 to promote the exchange of information and ideas among law libraries and individuals engaged in law library work. It is a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), a nonprofit educational organization with more than 5000 members nationwide. AALL members serve the needs of the legal community and the public at more than 1900 academic, firm, state, court and county law libraries.

HB 2944 addresses the urgent problem, indentified in the American Association of Law Libraries’ 2007 State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources, that more and more states are eliminating their print legal resources in favor of online-only, without assuring trustworthiness and reliability. This bill will ensure that online legal material is guaranteed the same level of authority traditionally provided by print publication.

Importantly, HB 2944 covers a range of key materials including the Oregon Constitution, Session laws, the Oregon Revised Statues, and Oregon Administrative Rules. This bill will ensure that anyone-- whether a citizen, judge, legislator, attorney or researcher-- will be able to verify the state legal material available to them online.

UELMA is supported by the Uniform Law Commission (ULC), the American Association of Law Libraries, and the American Bar Association. Many other stakeholders-- including the U.S. Government Printing Office, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Society of American Archivists, the National Center for State Courts, and the Association of Reporters of Judicial Decisions-- were observers to the ULC drafting committee.
I strongly urge you to support HB 2944, an Act Relating to Electronic Legal Material. By adopting UELMA, Oregon will establish itself as a leader among states that have recognized that official, electronic legal material must be authenticated, preserved and made permanently available to the public. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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