

**THURSTON COUNTY**  
**WASHINGTON**  
 SINCE 1852

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
 Cathy Wolfe  
 District One  
 Diane Oberquell  
 District Two  
 Robert N. Macleod  
 District Three

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

February 12, 2008

Supreme Court Rules Committee  
 Temple of Justice  
 PO Box 40929  
 Olympia WA 98504-0929

RECEIVED  
 SUPREME COURT  
 OF WASHINGTON  
 FEB 27 AM 2:33  
 MALD R. CARPENTER  
 CLERK

RE: Opposition to Proposed General Rule 34  
 Waiver of Court and Clerk's Fees and Charges in Civil cases based on Indigency

Dear Honorable Members:

We are writing to express our opposition to proposed General Rule 34. Passage of this rule would create a significant loss of revenue to Thurston County.

The Thurston County court system already has a process in place that allows parties in family law and civil matters to have the opportunity to waive the "filing fee" for a case they wish to file. Our court system has increased the amount of orders waiving filing fees consistently in recent years, along with reporting an increase in In Forma Pauperis (IFP) orders signed in all case types.

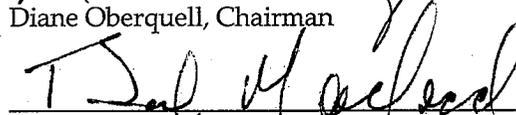
If the proposed rule is passed it would raise the eligibility for filing fees along with various other costs for individuals with income levels at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. The rule would also provide for the automatic waiver of several additional services such as jury demand fees, certified copies, mandatory arbitration, facilitator charges, etc., which would result in a dramatic decrease in much needed revenue.

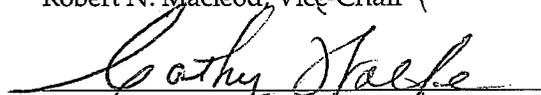
The passage of Proposed General Rule 34 would also cause severe damage to the system we have created that currently provides "access to justice" for our citizens, while continuing to provide funds that enable our Offices to be productive, accurate, and efficient, along with the ability to create technology supporting public access to records.

The adverse fiscal impact to counties and the Office of the County Clerk would greatly outweigh any significant benefit to those less fortunate. We hope you will carefully deliberate this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

  
 Diane Oberquell, Chairman

  
 Robert N. Macleod, Vice-Chair

  
 Cathy Wolfe, Commissioner

