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CHRISTINE LUVERA
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~ OFFICE OF THE ~
SKAGIT COUNTY CLERK

April 29, 2024

Sent via email.

Clerk of the Supreme Court
P.O. Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

RE: RAP 9.6 Rule Changes

Dear Clerk of the Supreme Court,

I write in response to the proposed rule changes to RAP 9.6. While I agree the proposed rule should be updated to include current technology and trends, I oppose this rule as written.

Technology has advanced quickly, however the rules regarding management have not. At a local level, Skagit County is facing a very challenging budget cycle, so much so that we have been advised that we are at risk of losing staff. Our office does not have the budget expense to purchase colored copiers, cameras, or county-issued cell phones to take pictures as this proposed rule change suggests. Fee statutes have not kept up with inflation and the copy fee does not come close to offsetting the significant staff time, equipment and supplies required to make copies of all documents in the court file and exhibits as the proposed rule requires. Skagit County would not be in a good position to be able to comply with this proposed rule change.

I understand our current process is not ideal, but this rule as proposed is not the answer. The answer is a collaborative effort to introduce technology that meets today's needs and future needs. Envision a unified statewide platform that allows a filer to upload remotely, the court to have immediate electronic access, and the clerk to manage exhibits efficiently and effectively. Today's technology is up to this task and can provide accountability so that every entry by all parties is completely trackable.

Clerks should not take on the lion's share of work that can otherwise be absorbed with technology. Earlier this year, I met with AOC leadership to support an ITG request by the Court of Appeals for digital evidence software.

I wholeheartedly support and advocate for a holistic approach and would be privileged to be part of a solutions-oriented work group to hear and address the concerns and needs of all justice partners to find a path forward with technology at the forefront of that discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Beaton
Skagit County Clerk