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Analysis of Decline in Administrative Assessments
Presentation to the
Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee
January 21, 2003, 3:30 p.m.
(bold italics relate to statements on handouts page 12)

Good afternoon. For the record my name is Ron Titus and I'm the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts and State Court Administrator. I will briefly discuss the research we have completed to date to try and determine why the administrative assessments are below projections, currently in excess of two million dollars.

I will also discuss a couple of our bill draft requests that if passed will provide some additional funding to the courts and provide a brief update on the status of the move of our Las Vegas office into the Regional Justice Center.

As you may know administrative assessments are charged on all misdemeanor convictions, the assessment amount related to the value of the fine. The vast majority of these misdemeanors are traffic citations. Only 10 percent of all misdemeanors are non traffic. The handout, on page 12, briefly summarizes our research of the decline in assessments.

In November we sent surveys to all justices' and municipal courts as well as to all law enforcement agencies. We received an *80 percent response from the courts* and about a *50 percent response from law enforcement agencies*.

Our survey to law enforcement asked:

- has the number of citations they have written decreased in the last two years,
- if they had reassigned officers to duties other than traffic (for those law enforcement agencies with dedicated traffic divisions), and

- if they had made any other changes that might impact the number of citations that they generate?

The court survey queried if there were:

- any changes in how assessments were calculated,
- any changes in sentencing (such as lower fines, community service, jail time),
- any changes in collection practices, and
- and changes in procedures for processing or handling administrative assessments?

Law Enforcement Findings

Law enforcement are writing fewer citations.

- Las Vegas Metro citations written decreased from 30,000 a quarter in year 2000 to about 25,000 a quarter in years 2001 and 2002. They are back up to about 30,000 the last two quarters.
- Reno PD was writing 3,000-5,000 citations a month in year 2000 and are down to between 1,000 and 2,000 for years 2001 and 2002.

Generally fewer officers are on the street to enforce traffic and many agencies cited staff shortages with many security activities taking away from traffic enforcement.

Las Vegas Metro did report a recent increase in traffic officers by 10 percent, and the new Sheriff, Bill Young, has said that traffic enforcement will be one of his priorities.

Court Findings

There have been no major changes in how administrative assessments are calculated.

Several court have increased fines and that should lead to an increase in assessments.

Several courts have reported an increase in community service and jail time.

Misdemeanor filings in Justices' and Municipal Courts have declined there has been a general decline in filings from years 2000 to 2001 with filings being flat between 2001 and 2002.

Calendar Year	2000	2001	2002
JC Non Traffic Misd.	42K	44K	45K
JC Traffic Misd.	398K	386K	387K
JC Total	440K	430K	432K
Muni Non Traffic	70K	65K	70K
Muni Traffic	245K	223K	229K
Muni Total	315K	288K	300K
Grand Total	755K	718K	732K

Basically we can not find a "smoking gun" that might account for the decrease administrative assessment revenue. No single change, event, or process appears to have caused the decline although the sum of these things I just mentioned may have cause the decrease in assessments.

Further study required

You will notice on the next page, page 13, we have plotted the total assessments collected by the courts since 1988. (Assessments began in 1983 but we only have data back to 1988.)

We have been assuming that assessments have declined in fiscal year 2002, and have focused our research on the decline, but in looking at the graph it may be feasible that fiscal years 2000 and 2001 were anomalies, were higher for some unknown reason, and that fiscal years 2002 and 2003 are more realistic of actual assessments. In fact if you remove the FY00 and FY01 data points, then the data points for FY02 and FY03 fall right on the trend that we have experienced from FY88 through FY99.

We are now going to focus our research on *whether or not were FY00 & 01 higher than might be expected.*

We will make our final report available to this committee when we have completed our research.

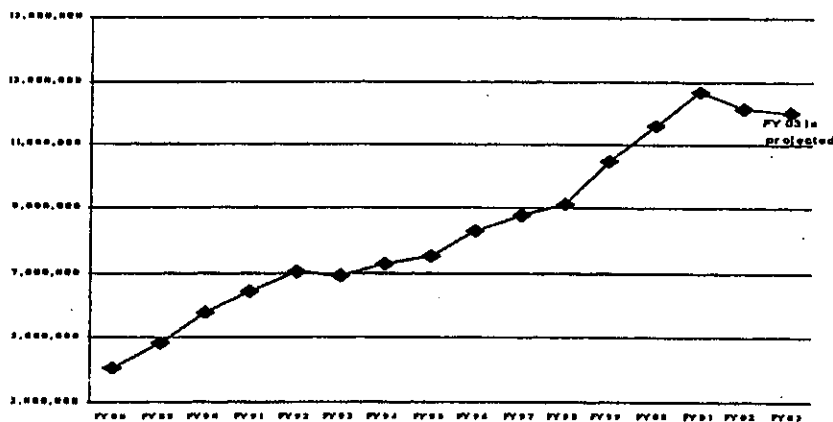
Thank You.

Analysis of Decline in Administrative Assessment

- Survey sent to all law enforcement agencies and all justices' and municipal courts
 - 80% of courts responded
 - 50% of law enforcement responded
- Findings
 - Law enforcement agencies are writing fewer citations
 - Fewer officers on the street (fewer officers, fewer citations)
 - Community service or jail time penalties have increased (generally no administrative assessments collected)
 - Misdemeanors filings have declined in last three years
- Further study required
 - Consider why sudden increase in FY00 & FY01 (are these years anomalies?)

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**Total Administrative Assessments Collected by Courts
 FY88 - FY03**



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Regional Justice Center
Presentation to the
Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee
January 21, 2003, 3:30 p.m.

For the record my name is Ron Titus and I'm the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts and State Court Administrator. I will briefly discuss the Regional Justice Center, or RJC, currently under construction in Las Vegas.

The Interim Finance Committee approved the Court leasing space in the RJC back in 1999 and a contract was signed with the County.

As prospective tenants we are not totally aware of all the issues surrounding the delays in the project.

Our primary concern being that the Court's space is built out according to specifications; and the date when we might be able to assume occupancy.

Currently the contractor is giving the county a date of August 3, 2003 as the "substantial completion" date. The county is projecting to begin moving the courts into the RJC four months after that date.

Currently we are to be the last tenant to assume occupancy so we expect to be able to move into the RJC sometime in the spring of 2004.

Thank You