



OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER STATE OF MONTANA

Date: October 7, 2016

To: Public Defender Commission

From: Scott Cruse, Chief Administrator

RE: Quarterly Staff Report

Since my arrival on August 22, 2016, my time has almost exclusively been devoted to the development of a mitigation plan to address OPD's projected budget shortfall of approximately \$3.5 million dollars. My efforts were not alone in this endeavor, but have been the result of extensive collaboration with OPD staff and external stakeholders who have all provided vital insight into the challenges associated with cutting such a significant amount from OPD's budget without significantly impacting the core services of our agency.

Although it is not a perfect plan, it is a starting point and we can adjust accordingly as we move forward in the fiscal year. At this time, I continue to work closely with the Office of Budget and Program Planning as well as staff on the implementation of the plan. Next week during the annual OPD training conference in Bozeman, the other program chiefs and I will meet with all of the Regional Deputies to go over the implementation of the two biggest aspects of the plan that will impact their regions, in particular the case backlogs that will occur when we cease hiring contract attorneys to staff new cases in both Program 1 and Program 3.

We will continue to keep the Commission informed as to the progress of the mitigation plan and any adjustments that might need to be made based on any number of variables that I am sure will occur as we move forward.