Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 9, 2015

Contact: Barry Massey, communications officer
bmassey@nmcourts.gov
505-827-4805
505-470-3436

CRITICAL FUNDING VETOED FOR MAGISTRATE COURTS

SANTA FE _ Artie Pepin, director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, issued the following statement about court funding in HB2.

As for the overall budget, Pepin said: "The courts will receive a modest budget increase next year that is essential for fulfilling our responsibility to provide fair and timely justice for New Mexico's citizens."

"The Judiciary appreciates that the Governor agreed to state budget provisions that will provide a total increase of $627,700 next year for treatment services for drug courts statewide. The additional funding will allow more offenders with drug and alcohol abuse problems to be served through court supervised programs that are less costly than prison and more effective in reducing recidivism."

Pepin also expressed serious concern about a veto by Governor Susana Martinez of a supplemental appropriation of $750,000 for Magistrate Courts in the current fiscal year.

"It is likely that with this cut, Magistrate Court services to New Mexicans will be disrupted because the Governor eliminated $750,000 necessary to pay anticipated expenses through June, when the current budget year ends," Pepin said Thursday.

"Magistrate court workers may be furloughed and lease payments could be delayed on court buildings to make up for the budget shortfall," he said.

"This appropriation was essential funding for Magistrate Court operations. A veto by the Governor last year eliminated the revenue source that would have paid for current Magistrate Court operations," Pepin said.

"For many New Mexicans, local Magistrate Courts represent the face of the judiciary. The courts resolved more than 179,000 cases last year, including DWIs, misdemeanors and traffic citations," he said.

Pepin concluded that "The Judiciary will continue to be prudent stewards of public funds."

###