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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Mono County Establishes Office of Public Defender  
to Strengthen Indigent Defense Services**

**MONO COUNTY, CA (August 14, 2025)** – At its meeting on August 12, the Mono County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted an ordinance to establish an Office of the Public Defender. This action follows a previous directive given by the Board on June 17 to create an institutional public defender position to better manage and enhance the county’s indigent defense program.

The California Penal Code mandates that counties provide legal counsel to individuals charged with a crime who cannot afford an attorney. To meet this mandate, Mono County has historically relied on a system of contracted private attorneys. The new Office of the Public Defender is not intended to litigate cases, but will instead focus on the administration of these services. The Public Defender will be responsible for managing contracts, overseeing billing, applying for grants, and ensuring an equitable distribution of caseloads among contract counsel.

Christopher Beck, Mono County Counsel, emphasized the importance of this new office. *“The purpose of this office is to ensure that we are not only meeting our mandated responsibilities but also providing the highest quality of service to our community,”* he said. *“This position will allow us to create a more efficient and effective system for indigent defense.”*

The Board of Supervisors looks forward to the positive impact this new office will have on the County. *“This is a critical step in our ongoing commitment to a safe and healthy community,”* said Lynda Salcido, Board of Supervisors Chair (District 5). *“By creating this position, we are ensuring that all residents have access to fair and just legal representation and that our system operates with the highest level of professional integrity.”*

The County will now begin the recruitment process to fill the new Public Defender position.

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