



Member Organizations

1000 Friends
AFSCME Local #3135
Bienestar

CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
City of Ashland
City of Beaverton
City of Corvallis
City of Eugene
City of Gresham
City of Portland
City of Tigard

Clackamas Community Land Trust
Clackamas County

Clackamas Housing Action Network
Coalition for a Livable Future
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team, Inc.
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Housing Fund

Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Homeless Families Coalition
Housing Advocacy Group of Washington Co.
Housing Development Center
Impact Northwest

Interfaith Committee on Homelessness
Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County

Manufactured Home Owners of Oregon, Inc.
Metro
Multnomah County
NAYA Family Center
NeahCasa

Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
Neighborhood Partnerships
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Community Land Trust Coalition
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Oregon Action

Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Food Bank

Oregon Housing Authorities
Oregon Opportunity Network

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc.
Portland State Univ., Student Legal & Mediation Services

Proud Ground
REACH CDC
Rogue Valley CDC
Rose CDC

Rural Community Assistance Corp.
St. Vincent DePaul of Lane County

Shelter Care
Sisters Of The Road

Umpqua CDC
Washington County

Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services

Testimony in Support

HB 2354

Senate Finance and Revenue Committee

May 11, 2011

My name is Janet Byrd, and I am the Executive Director of Neighborhood Partnerships, which convenes the Housing Alliance. The Housing Alliance is a coalition of organizations from across the state that have come together out of a concern for those in our communities that do not have a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home, or access to a community that provides a range of opportunities and services. We know that we all benefit when our neighbors have full access to opportunity.

We know that across Oregon, renters are faced with the hard choice of paying for rent or for other necessities. I have provided with my testimony some fact sheets for selected counties that illustrate this. In the face of this need, we need to maintain the tools and strategies that work to make housing accessible to all Oregonians. One such tool is to allow local governments to exempt affordable housing properties from paying property taxes.

HB 2354 extends the sunset on ORS 307.540 to 307.548, which allows local communities to exempt affordable housing developments from paying local property taxes. HB 2354 proposes that the sunset be extended from the current date of July 1, 2014 until July 1, 2027, and makes no other changes to the law.

Property taxes make up a substantial portion of the operating costs of affordable housing. This exemption allows local jurisdictions to choose to support affordable housing in their communities by granting property tax exemptions for housing owned by non-profit organizations that provide homes to low-income households. In turn, rents are reduced for residents.

As you have heard, this program is used by several cities across Oregon. In these communities that have chosen to adopt this local exemption, non-profit corporations may apply for the exemption with their local jurisdiction. They renew their application annually, and must show that the housing to be exempted remains occupied by those making 60% of area median income or less. The local government can also end their exemption at any time by repealing the ordinance adopting the program.

We all benefit from a community in which residents have access to opportunity and a safe, stable place to call home. In addition, renters with low incomes and non-profit housing developers benefit from this exemption. Renters with low incomes benefit through lower rents and housing they can afford. Non-profit housing developers benefit by being better able to fulfill their mission.

We know that affordable housing is a key to stable and thriving communities. Affordable housing gives people an opportunity to build better lives. It provides the foundation for adults to access employment, for kids to succeed in school. Local jurisdictions that see the value of stable housing should have the option of providing this support to low income families and others who most need our support to thrive. We urge you to support HB 2354. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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