



CITY OF
**PORTLAND,
OREGON**

Sam Adams, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Randy Leonard, Commissioner

February 2, 2012

Rep. Phil Barnhart, Co-Chair
Rep. Vicki Berger, Co-Chair
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St. NE, Room 143
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 4039

Dear Representatives Barnhart and Berger, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Portland, we want to express our support to extend the senior property tax deferral program to low-income seniors with reverse mortgages.

Many seniors recently disqualified from the tax deferral program have no financial resources outside of social security income, which barely covers basic needs. Most of these participants had assumed that once certified for assistance through this program, they would be reasonably secure in their retirement years and safe from the threat of tax defaults. Now disqualified, many low-income seniors are faced with the impossible task of coming up with thousands of dollars in property taxes in a very short time frame, or face foreclosure and possible homelessness.

We appreciate the financial challenges facing this program and encourage the legislature to seek solutions to make this vital program fiscally sustainable and, in turn, eliminate the threat of senior citizens losing their homes. We understand the limitations presented by a short session; however, we urge you to address the immediate and acute problems facing low-income seniors with reverse mortgages who no longer qualify for the senior property tax deferral program.

Sincerely,

Sam Adams
Mayor

Amanda Fritz
Commissioner

Nick Fish
Commissioner

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner

Randy Leonard
Commissioner