



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Administrative Services

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The Honorable Phil Barnhart, Chair
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court Street NE, Room 143
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2940 and the Oregon transparency website

Dear Chair Barnhart and members of the committee:

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) offers this letter and accompanying report as testimony on HB 2940. As you know HB 2940 makes changes to reporting requirements related to property taxpayers that receive certain property tax exemptions. The bill requires information be provided to DAS to be posted on the Oregon transparency website. We believe it is important for the committee to understand an ongoing issue related to posting additional information to the transparency website.

There is an inherent tension between the desire for more information to be provided in a more user-friendly manner and the statutory requirement that DAS design and maintain the website within existing resources, at no additional cost and without reallocating resources. We do this mainly by limiting the number of times information is updated and by linking to existing websites or simply posting documents as we receive them, with no synthesis or analysis added. Each session, the legislature considers legislation requiring the posting of additional information – this session there are at least six bills introduced – which stretch that tension between posting information and doing it at no additional cost.

In 2013, the Legislature approved HB 3035, which directed DAS to develop a plan for providing certain information on the transparency website. DAS took that opportunity to also seek stakeholder input on other improvements or information desired in order to get a comprehensive view of the potential future of the transparency website. A copy of that report and its executive summary is attached. The bottom line is that DAS is at the limit of meeting the needs within existing resources, and with modest investment more information could be accommodated in a more user-friendly manner.

As the committee considers HB 2940, and as other committees hear related bills, DAS asks that consideration be given to resourcing the work in order for the website to be sustainable over the long term.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

Barry Pack
Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Department of Administrative Services

Encl. (2)