

March 24, 2015

Representative Shemia Fagan
Chair, House Consumer Protection and Government Effectiveness Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Fagan and Members of the Committee:

The Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) represents approximately 950 districts across the State of Oregon providing a wide variety of single services like water, sanitary services, parks and recreation, fire, and library to mention a few. Our voluntary boards and commissions are dedicated to providing the highest quality of service to our citizens. SDAO would like to express its opposition to HB 3321.

HB 3321 would require public contracting agencies to undertake a considerable number of new duties and requirements, create new unfunded mandates to those local entities, and change public meetings laws among several other things.

Our members strive to make every public dollar stretch as far as possible. However, it is clear that this measure would add considerable costs to public contracting agencies in the conduct of purchasing goods and services in Oregon. Although some of the information to be gathered, as required under the measure, can be compiled and provided to anyone making a public records request some of the information that must be compiled is new. Furthermore, the requirement to continually provide highly detailed information, regardless of the size of the contract, to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) will undoubtedly be a large undertaking and costly burden. Additionally, gathering the previous five years worth of goods and services contract details for many districts could be colossal time consuming, challenging and laborious endeavor.

To complicate things, the measure's requirement that meetings between contractors and purchasing agency heads or members of the local contract review board be considered public meetings for the purposes of ORS 192.610 to 192.690 could result in public bodies unwittingly violating Oregon's public meeting requirements. This is a big concern because not all local contracting agency heads nor their local contract review board members may be aware that an individual is associated with a particular firm conducting business with that public body. This requirement is overly broad in its application and would appear to unnecessarily expose public bodies to potentially high legal expenses.

Finally, many of Oregon's 950 special districts are small rural single service governments that are run by volunteers and part-time employees. Some of the requirements contained in the measure related to contract oversight, monitoring and administration will also be expensive and difficult to comply with for many of these entities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Landauer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Landauer
Government Affairs
Special Districts Association of Oregon.