

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

House Committee on Human Services and Housing

REVENUE: No revenue impact**FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: NONE****Action:****Vote:**

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: Robyn Johnson, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 4/29, 5/11, 5/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Transfers administration and funding structure for elderly rental assistance program from Department of Revenue to Oregon Housing and Community Services. Prescribes operative dates. Takes effect 91st day after *sine die*.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Process for notifying seniors of program change

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.**BACKGROUND:**

The elderly rental assistance program reimburses low-income seniors for individual property taxes that were paid as part of their rent, if certain criteria are met. The property tax requirement is the only connection the program has to Department of Revenue (DOR); DOR issues payments, but has no oversight or other resources. Since 2011, the Legislature has discussed ways to improve this program. A workgroup between the Department of Revenue, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), and stakeholders recommended that the funding for the Elderly Rental Assistance program be transferred to OHCS and that it be operated in similar ways to existing programs offering rental assistance. The ultimate goal of transferring the program from DOR to OHCS, is to transform it into a more effective and useful tool for those who qualify, and to take advantage of opportunities to connect low-income seniors to other services. OHCS can provide the needed program development and oversight, and will serve seniors through its network of service delivery partners. OHCS will work with its existing networks, including Community Action Agencies, to discuss the service delivery model. The bill says that the program is scheduled to transition to Housing and Community Services beginning July 1, 2017. Until then, seniors will continue to be served by the DOR. Participants in the program will receive information regarding the transition several times prior to 2017.

Senate Bill 296-A transfers administration of the elderly rental assistance program from DOR to OHCS.