



## **SB 311 A new seismic upgrade spending program – but we have no money to spend**

Testimony for Senate Finance and Revenue – 3.14.2017

Since money to cover the lost local and k-12 revenue is not coming from outside the state, this is another example of a good idea in need of revenues that simply do not exist.

SB 311 asks you to allow local jurisdictions to address earthquake readiness. Upfront costs undoubtedly will be lower than what the costs of the Big One will be. But business owners will just need to shoulder this responsibility on their own. While having a greater impact, radon, asbestos and lead abatement are all funded by businesses themselves. It's not a bad idea, but it is an ask for new spending, despite the fact that the current budget has a \$1.6 B shortfall, and local jurisdictions face similarly tight budgets. If you choose to support this measure, you are also deciding that Oregon's children can do with fewer teachers or days of school, since every abated k-12 dollar impacts k-12 throughout the state.

Tax Fairness Oregon would be delighted to support innovative proposals like SB 311, but we want to remind you that every grant, appropriation or tax incentive you approve reduces the life blood of Oregon. You need to help Ways and Means to decide which good ideas to move forward and which should not move out of your committee. This bill is an example of one that should die in your committee.

Keep the following facts and figures in mind when you make your decision on SB 311:

- Every \$85,000 you invest in another program would buy a teacher for an overcrowded classroom in your district.
- Every dollar that goes to the new program reduces the number of dollars available for Oregon Opportunity Grants.
- Every million you spend on better election outcomes means 350 families won't get rent assistance so they can stay in their homes (via the Emergency Housing Account), or
- There will be no funds for 100 eligible children to attend high quality preschool, benefiting them and their families their entire lives. There are more than 20,000 eligible children (below 200% of poverty level) that we don't reach now.

Tax Fairness Oregon strongly believes that until Oregon has a fundamentally fair and adequate revenue stream that can support the basic needs of its citizens, the legislature should not be considering new ways to spend money – via new programs, tax incentives or grants for new bright ideas.

***We read the bills and follow the money***