



Clackamas County Pomona Grange

June 1, 2017

Chairman Barnhart,

I thank you for the courtesy and information at the public hearing on SB 181A in May. The members of the Clackamas County Pomona Grange continue to oppose SB 181A for a variety of reasons.

We believe that serious changes in state statute should be thoroughly discussed and not be limited by a work group to invited testimony. If changes are needed in statute to address new problems and situations the volunteer based non-profit community should have been a part of the discussion rather than discovering this bill in the nearly 3,000 bills during the legislative assembly.

Instituting additional reporting requirements and punishing late reports by volunteers with the loss of the property tax exemption seems excessive to us. During the testimony given at the public hearing, the phrase "a first step" was heard at least twice. If the intent is the eventually put all non-profits into a reporting system, it is critical that this first step be well thought out and all questions be answered. If there is a current problem, it should be our goal to resolve the issue, not create additional problems that then need to be fixed or leave lasting damage to our communities.

Oregon's statutory property tax exemption has allowed organizations to put their fund-raising efforts toward serving their community rather than raising funds for payment of taxes. Our volunteer organizations provided needed services that couldn't be provided by government services. If a law with unintended consequences put even a minority of these volunteer based organizations out of business with additional reporting requirements and drastic penalties for errors, the citizens in Oregon communities will suffer.

In addition, members of non-profit organizations tend to be property owners who are already paying property taxes and simply desire to give service back to their communities through these organizations.

The final point is that SB 181A will create two classes of non-profits in the section it deals with; reporting and non-reporting. This does not seem equitable or proper as it would appear that those classed as non-reporting would be most able to provide additional new reports. If this bill is "a first step" then will this reporting and non-reporting classification be continued? Currently statute has broad categories with a number of organizations named as examples of the types of groups. But all are required to follow the same law and are subject to the same penalties.

The Clackamas Pomona Grange stands ready to work with legislators and County Assessors to find good solutions to any problems that exist with the state statutes that deal with property tax exemptions. SB 181A is not a good solution in its present form.

We believe that it will not benefit our communities by adding additional reporting requirements for some, or by potentially removing the property tax exemption from the non-profit organizations for simple errors in filing reports.

We urge you to reject SB 181A.

The Clackamas Pomona Grange is made up of the members of the 16 Community Granges in Clackamas County. If you desire further information, please contact myself, a Grange in your district, or the Oregon State Grange.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward L. Luttrell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Edward L. Luttrell, President
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