

HB 2916 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Housing

Prepared By: C. Ross, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 4/22, 4/29, 5/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Lifts limitation on number of transitional housing camps established within an urban growth boundary. Expands use of such housing to include individuals who lack safe accommodations. Expresses intent that such housing is temporary and may include yurts, huts, tents and other fabric and similar structures. Makes provision of parking and walkways discretionary. Removes requirement that yurts be subject to specialty building codes applicable to manufactured structures. Removes application of recreation park specialty code to shared facilities. Permits Oregon Health Authority to develop best practices for public health. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of keeping one's person and one's belongings secure
- Sites that offer safe, secure, individual sleeping quarters without more, along with shared restrooms, kitchens, laundries and common heated areas
- Success of smaller, gated sites with 25-30 residents, where residents participate and have roles, compared to fewer but larger sites with higher populations
- Critical benefit of transitional housing, to shift residents' energies away from bare survival, freeing them to concentrate time and attention on other barriers
- Inaccuracy of dated stereotype of homeless person; many typical, modern working persons become homeless due for economic reasons
- Current sites that are models for other communities to replicate
- Portland area residents' concerns about campsite operating under different authority: declaration of housing emergency, instead of authority to offer transitional housing
- Portland area residents' concerns about lack of local government responsiveness

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

[-A5 amendment, 04.24.19] Refines reference to operators of transitional housing; removes reference to campground.

BACKGROUND:

Transitional housing generally refers to temporary accommodations that provide additional services, such as reintegration and employment support for individuals successfully released from incarceration, or residential treatment settings for individuals with behavioral health concerns, or supported camps for individuals experiencing homelessness. Transitional housing programs typically provide shelter while attempting to assist residents with more permanent, affordable housing.

Municipalities in Oregon are currently authorized to provide transitional housing for persons who lack permanent housing but for whom there is no available low-income alternative, in the form of campgrounds within their urban growth boundaries. Currently, such sites may consist of separate yurt structures for use as living units by one or more individuals or families; are required to provide parking and walkways; may provide other services such as

HB 2916 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

telephone, water, toilets, showers, and laundry; and the municipality is authorized to limit the duration of a resident's stay. Current law also limits such campgrounds to two parcels and specifies they should be sited near grocery stores and public transportation. Any shared water, toilet, shower, laundry, or cooking facilities are regulated by provisions governing state recreational areas, and Oregon's 2017 Transitional Housing Standard (model building codes available for adoption by municipalities) contains suggested construction standards for their establishment.

House Bill 2916-A refines provisions applicable to transitional housing campgrounds to support their establishment. It allows persons without safe housing to be included among other eligible residents. It lifts the two-parcel limitation. It allows yurts to be exempt from specialty codes applicable to manufactured structures; expresses the intent that such housing is for temporary seasonal or emergency use; and provides for all manner of fabric and similar structures in addition to yurts. Parking and walkways are no longer mandatory, and the Oregon Health Authority is authorized to develop public health standards instead of making shared services subject to provisions that apply to recreational areas.

Unanimous out of House committee; 2 no votes off House floor.