



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
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DATE: June 25, 2020
TO: Joint Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: HB 4212, Emergency Shelter

Dear Speaker Kotek, President Courtney, and members of the Joint Committee:

The “COVID-19 Omnibus” bill contains many elements, and this letter of support focuses solely on the section titled “Emergency Shelter”. Obviously that portion of the legislation cannot pass on its own, so Lane County urges support for HB 4212, and asks that you move the bill to the floor with a “DO PASS” recommendation.

During the 2020 session of the Legislature, Lane County was highly involved with HB 4001, a bill which was designed to assist local governments with providing enhanced services to individuals and families struggling with homelessness in Oregon. Among other things, that measure provided for “super-siting” of navigation centers, which are a specific type of emergency shelter that have been deployed in some, but not all, communities in Oregon.

The concept of super-siting remains exceedingly important and we were happy to know that it would be part of the agenda for the special session. It essentially waives local land use regulations for specific facilities that are designed and operated to assist individuals and families that need assistance to climb out of homelessness. This language, if adopted, is critical for Lane County as it evolves a navigation center located within the city limits of Eugene.

As COVID-19 spread into Oregon, and in spite of the sudden adjournment of the Legislative session, Lane County elevated conceptual planning for a navigation center by purchasing a building that previously housed a local Veterans Administration Clinic. We needed a facility to house and safely sequester those infected with COVID-19 who had no home and thus were challenged to comply with Governor Brown’s Executive Order on staying home. We will transition this site into a navigation center when the threat of the pandemic has passed. It is practically the poster child for this measure, as it is located in a part of Eugene that is zoned such that it precludes the ability to allow overnight stays within this type of (commercial) building.

While not impossible to change the zoning within the City of Eugene’s legal framework, this section of HB 4212 will make it a far quicker and easier process, and will save resources that can be best deployed to provide the services our residents expect. Lane County urges support.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER