



February 15, 2024

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Re: Opposition to SB 1544

The LOC opposes SB 1544 as written, which creates a new special assessment for seniors.

While we recognize that seniors on fixed incomes can struggle to pay property taxes and keep their homes, creating a new special assessment for homeowners over the age of 65 is not the best way to address this issue.

Property tax revenue is in most cases, the largest and most important revenue source for local governments. Local governments have been struggling to keep up with critical services under constitutional limits imposed by Measures 5 and 50. Oregon's property tax system is complicated, inequitable and increasingly forces local governments to choose between cutting services or raising fees to compensate for stagnant revenue that does not keep pace with inflation.

In recognition of the need for property tax relief to low-income seniors, the state created the Oregon Property Tax Deferral for Disabled and Senior Homeowners Program, where the state will pay property taxes for qualifying homeowners to the county.

We would welcome further discussion about updating the senior deferral program to ensure that no senior is losing their home because of property taxes.

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