



Oregon Women's Rights Coalition

HB 3589 Senior Housing Development Initiative-Support

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and member of the committee.

We all agree that seniors on fixed incomes face struggles in maintaining housing. It seems that many developments do not account for access issues and studio and one-bedroom units. Some have been developing senior cottages.

The Oregon Women's Rights Coalition urges you to also look at developments that do not isolate over 55 renters for all developments this bill might target.

You heard compelling testimony from Ms. Schubert on just such developments.

We would call your attention to a development in LaGrande called Timber Ridge. It includes accessible units; it has various sizes of units, and it encourages community. It was developed by the Northeast Oregon Housing Authority. <https://www.communitydevpartners.com/communities/timber-ridge/>

But we also want to talk about the Senior Deferral Revolving Account for which \$24 million would be used for this initiative.

The fund was established and is funded by the monies that come to the state after the state pays the property taxes for seniors on fixed incomes.

Here's how it works.

Do you know an Oregon senior or person with disabilities that own their own home and are struggling with their property tax payments?

There is a solution for those with household income under \$60,000 for 2024.

There is a state deferral program for those over 62 and those with a disability qualified for social security disability.

The State of Oregon pays the property taxes to the county (split with all the taxing districts). It is paid in full by November 15, so the 3% discount applies. In exchange when the property is sold, or transferred or the owner dies the state is reimbursed for the taxes plus 6% simple interest.

The household can have assets up to \$500,000. Assets do not include the home or personal property (a car is personal property). The real market value of a home allowed to be in the program varies by the amount of time in the home and varies by county in which the home is located. This must be the primary home of the qualifying person.

APPLICATION FOR THE PROGRAM MUST BE MADE BETWEEN JAN 1, 2025, AND APRIL 15, 2025, for the tax billing that would be due in November. If the application deadline is missed there is a late fee of up to \$180.

The information is on the Oregon Department of Revenue website under the Senior Deferral.

<https://www.oregon.gov/dor/programs/property/pages/senior-and-disabled-property-tax-deferral-program.aspx>

Currently the program is undersubscribed. Many of us believe that not enough people know about the program. There are no advertisements such as for the Cultural Trust, the College Savings Account or Oregon's Saving Program.

Some counties tell folks about the program when the property tax bill is issued. However, that misses the deadline of April 15 so there is a penalty fee.

We agree that many efforts are needed to keep seniors housed. Do not overlook this program.

Marcia Kelley

Public Policy Advocate