

# Oregon Housing and Community Services Department

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## Legislature Update

February 27, 2009

**Lisa Joyce**  
Legislative Relations Manager



### For More Information

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Hallmark legislation predicted to raise about \$15 million in the 2009-11 biennium to support housing for low-income Oregonians passed the Senate Thursday.

The Housing Opportunity Bill, HB2436, passed with two more votes than the 18 needed to meet the super-majority requirement.

"This vote solidifies legislative momentum for affordable housing," said **Rick Crager**, deputy director for Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) of the 20 yes, nine no and one absentee vote.

With Gov. Ted Kulongoski's approval, HB2436 will add a \$15 fee to documents recorded in Oregon and could raise up to \$40 million or more each biennium depending on economic conditions throughout the state.

"This was quite a day for the cause of affordable housing in Oregon," said **Sen. Betsy Johnson** (D – Scappoose), who carried the bill for the floor vote.

At a press conference Thursday to announce OHCS' \$5 million affordable-housing grant received from the **MacArthur Foundation**, Johnson raised the increasing need for housing among families hit by the loss of construction jobs and seniors and people with disabilities.

The **MacArthur Foundation** grant also attracted the attention of **Sen. Margaret Carter** (D-Portland) at the press conference, who, with Johnson, highlighted the power of public-private partnerships in multiplying the greater good from contributions such as this.

"However, we want to keep everyone mindful that this pot of money from the MacArthur grant and HB 2436 still does not meet the need for financing affordable housing in the state," **Crager** cautioned.

OHCS hopes to get \$19.4 million from lottery-backed bonds proposed in Gov. Kulongoski's recommended 2009-11 budget; \$16.3 million of which would also fund preservation of existing subsidized housing stock.

### In other action:

**HB 2261:** The bill streamlines the process for how tax-exempt bonds for affordable housing affordable housing project development are processed. If enacted into law, the bill formalizes that OHCS can pair tax-exempt and taxable bonds with Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credits to finance projects. Passed Thursday, Feb. 26 out of the House Revenue Committee and now goes to the House floor.



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**HB 2225:** Introduced on behalf of and supported by the Department of Land Conservation and Development, the bill provides a pilot program that allows up to five Oregon cities to add up to 50 acres to their urban growth boundaries for building affordable housing. The bill will receive its first public hearing on Thursday, March 5 in the Housing committee on Sustainability and Economic Development, at 1:00 PM.

**Reconciled 2007-09 State Budget:** The Joint Ways and Means Committee looked today at the 2007-09 budget reconciliation; it will go to the floor next week. The committee will then shift its focus to the 2009-011 biennial budget and the projected \$3 billion gap in available revenues and the amount needed to sustain existing programs.

**For more information, please contact:**

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