**Dear Friends and Neighbors,**

It is an honor to begin serving my fifth full term as State Representative for District Eight. This session, I have been assigned Chair of the Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency committee, as well as serving on the Business and Labor, Land Use, and Rules committees. I have prepared the following information in order to give you some insight into what we hope to accomplish in the upcoming session. I will be submitting bills to help address:

1. Environmental Protection and Food Safety
2. [Health Care Transformation](http://www.leg.state.or.us/holvey/newsletters/newsletter_031412.html#transformation)
3. Worker and Employment Protection
4. Strengthening Protections for Homeowners and Consumers
5. Growing Revenue and Economic Development

In addition to advocating for policy and legislation that reflects our values, one of my primary responsibilities as your state representative is to help my constituents navigate the state system and help you address concerns or disputes with state agencies.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office at (503) 968-1408 or rep.paulholvey@state.or.us if I can be of any assistance with these matters.

Respectfully,



Paul Holvey

**Environmental Protection and Food Safety**

This session, I have introduced several pieces of legislation to protect the health and safety of our environment, our food, and the products we keep in our homes. Without adequate protections against these threats, we cannot expect Oregon to prosper in the future.

**HB2532** – This bill would ban owning, raising, or importing any living GMO fish in Oregon. Recently, we have seen the development of new, genetically modified breeds of salmon. It is still unclear what the impact on our environment and our native salmon populations could be if these genetically compromised breeds were released into the wild, but we know it could be devastating.

**HB2427** – I hear often from constituents about growing canola crops in the Willamette Valley, which poses a serious danger to our farmland and to our organic seed crop industry. It is critical that we ban this practice – that’s why I am cosponsoring a bill to do just that.

**HB2532** – Consumers should have the right to know whether or not their food has been genetically modified. This bill would require food manufacturers to label which of their products are made from genetically modified crops.

**HB2937** – There are currently no labeling requirements for the ingredients of household cleaning products. With this bill, manufacturers would have to list all of the ingredients, so consumers can decide to keep potentially hazardous substances out of their homes.

**HB2928** – Presently, to ban harmful or toxic compounds, specific laws must be written. This would allow DHS to review individual toxic compounds, regulate their usage, and potentially ban them by rule.

**Health Care Transformation**

Our state will see a great deal of change with the way we handle health care, and will be a pioneer in expanding access to care. Next year, we will see the statewide implementation of Coordinated Care Organizations, or networks of local health and medical providers. These local networks will increase Oregonian’s access to affordable care and preventative treatment options, with the aim of reducing the need for costly emergency room visits. These CCO’s have better results managing patients with ongoing health problems or chronic pain issues, and allows them to receive the services they need to maintain a high quality of life affordably. Next year, we will also see the implementation of our Health Insurance Exchange, which will create a statewide marketplace for people who otherwise may not be able to afford coverage to find cost-effective health insurance options.

We are also working hard to promote healthy choices and options for our children, especially with regards to nutrition. I am cosponsoring a bill to allow the Oregon Health Authority to operate Farm Direct Nutrition programs, which would provide fresh, local produce to low-income people, seniors, and children (HB 2992). Programs like this pay dividends back into our community and in our economy, increase the overall healthfulness of our citizens, and reduce the need for costly medical treatment.

With our innovative approach, we are positioned to be a nationwide leader in health care by expanding availability to a record number of people, increasing the quality of care, and cutting long-term healthcare spending.

If you are one of the 650,000 Oregonians currently receiving Medicare benefits, be aware that you are eligible for assistance in navigating your healthcare choices through Oregon’s Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA). With its team of volunteers, SHIBA can help beneficiaries understand their insurance choices, as well as enrollment help and how to appeal Medicare decisions. Feel free to contact them at 1-800-722-4134, online at [www.oregonshiba.org](http://www.oregonshiba.org) or at [www.medicarestartsat65.org](http://www.medicarestartsat65.org), or by email at shiba.oregon@state.or.us

**Worker and Employment Protection**

In order for our economy and industries to thrive, it is vital that adequate measures are in place to protect the rights of our workers. This session, I have a group of bills that aim to ensure that workplace and employment protections, and to protect against sub-standard or dishonest business practices.

HB2535 – Would require temporary employment agencies to provide worker’s compensation insurance for temporary employees, so they will be covered if they sustain a work-related injury.

HB2540 – Allows the Construction Contractors Board to deny, revoke, or suspend the license of any contractor who has violated the board’s rules or engaged in dishonest business practices. This helps to maintain fairness in this industry that the board has fought to secure for decades.

HB2529 – This bill would expand unemployment insurance so that taxi drivers are also eligible for benefits in the event that they find themselves out of work for a period of time.

HB2545 – Allows the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries to debar from public works projects any contractors that fail to pay any employees or subcontractor’s employees, fail to post prevailing rate of wage, or that falsify any information on certified statements.

**Strengthening Protections for Homeowners and Consumers**

Oregon is still recovering from the economic downturn of 2008, and many homeowners still need additional protection from foreclosure and predatory lending practices. As of last December, 2.7% of Oregonians are at some stage of the foreclosure process. Several of the pieces of legislation I am submitting this session aim to ensure that Oregon consumers are not taken advantage of, and to promote fairness in our banking, financial, and real estate industries.

HB2526 – This toughens the requirements for a debt buyer to bring action against the person who owes; failure to meet these practices would be considered unlawful collection, and there is an increased statutory damage available.

HB2525 – Allows for class action lawsuits for the victims of unlawful insurance practices, increases the stature of limitations for these cases to two years, and allows the Attorney General to punish these cases under unlawful trades practices law.

HB2527 – This bill requires sellers to fully disclose the monetary value and a description of any other property or asset offered as a concession by the seller prior to sale.

**Growing Revenue and Economic Development**

For many years, our state has been badly starved for revenue. This has led to massive funding cuts for our schools, and has greatly reduced many vital services for communities across the state. As evidenced by the mild net increase of $87 million in our revenue forecast for the upcoming biennium, our state is on a slow but steady path toward economic recovery. To build a solid foundation for future economic growth and success, we must develop and maintain new, reliable sources of revenue. One of the bills I am working on would, if passed, implement a statewide 5% sales tax - including provisions and credits to ensure that the economic impact would not disproportionately harm lower-income families - with all revenue dedicated to funding our public schools. I am also working on a piece of legislation that would allow for more tax revenues to be generated from our timber and forest products (HB2555) – including special tax credits for those products milled right here in Oregon.

Access to capital is critically important for small businesses to expand, and vital for economic development of the state. During the recession, many of our state’s businesses required state or federal assistance to access capital. That is why last session I worked to help expand the Credit Enhancement Fund to guarantee of some small, non-traded sector projects with federal funds. These projects benefitted their communities and helped boost economic development in some rural parts of the state. In 2012, the number of projects guaranteed under this fund increased 25% from the year before, and the total loan amount went from $19 million in 2011 to over $30 million in 2012. This expansion directly resulted in the creation of over 200 jobs, and the retention of hundreds more.

In order to successfully position our state for future economic growth, we must make sure that we are training our workforce with the skills they need to thrive in tomorrow’s economy. That’s why I have introduced a bill to establish a State Apprenticeship Education and Training Fund. Robust apprenticeship programs allow for many avenues toward employment for a broad range of Oregonians, and allow people from all economic backgrounds to learn a trade and make a living wage job. With a dynamic and considered approach, we can reinvest in our state’s future by providing higher quality educational and employment opportunities for our children without placing an undue burden on working families and small businesses.

Also, with tax season around the corner, be sure to have your returns filed before April 15th. If you make less than $57,000 a year, you can E-file your federal and state returns for free online with any of our approved preparation software. You can find out more information online at <http://www.oregon.gov/dor/ESERV/Pages/online.aspx>