



OFFICE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKER
900 Court St., N.E., Room H-269
Salem OR 97301
<http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/kotek>

NEWS RELEASE

March 3, 2018

Megen Ickler, 503-986-1204
megen.ickler@oregonlegislature.gov

State invests in housing, child welfare, mental health care and economic development

Budget rebalance focuses on critical needs and prudent spending

SALEM – Today, the Oregon House of Representatives adjourned a short, 27-day legislative session focused on emergent needs and making necessary adjustments to the 2017-19 budget. The destabilizing effects of last year’s federal tax reform required lawmakers to take prudent actions to protect the budget, as well as address critical issues and make targeted one-time investments to benefit all parts of the state.

“The session was marked by a clear effort to take practical steps that keep Oregon moving forward, build strong communities, and protect the most vulnerable Oregonians,” said House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-North/NE Portland). “Since Oregon continues to face sweeping changes at the national level, we made sure we were spending responsibly given anticipated budget challenges next year and chose to make prudent investments to build a future where everyone has access to the best that Oregon has to offer.”

The Legislature is poised to deposit \$200 million into the state’s Rainy Day Fund and utilized a one-time \$140 million infusion of cash to pay down the state’s pension debt, with a majority of that money going into the new School District Unfunded Liability Fund to help pay for K-12 PERS costs. In addition, lawmakers put together a \$25.5 million funding package to improve the safety and well-being of Oregon’s foster children. There were also investments in rural economic development and higher education to spread prosperity around the state, and the state strengthened its commitment to protect the environment and build a clean energy future.

Standing Up for Vulnerable Children:

- \$25.5 million for child welfare/foster care – \$13.2 million for 186 new positions within the Department of Human Services (caseworkers, case aides, office support staff, and recruitment specialists), \$9.8 million designated for child care stipends for foster parents, and \$2.5 million placed in reserve to continue to improve child safety, stabilize the workforce, and help foster families.
- \$4.3 million dedicated to increasing the efficiency of background checks to speed up the approval of potential foster parents and other providers.
- \$1.3 million to add two more counties to the Parent Child Representation pilot program to improve the quality of legal representation for children and parents in juvenile dependency cases.
- \$438,000 for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), who support foster children in the courts.
- \$750,000 to support foster parents through respite care and training foster parent mentors.
- \$1.98 million for increased inspections and lead testing in child care facilities.
- \$30 million set aside to address any unanticipated needs in foster care, senior services, and other programs for the most vulnerable.

Tackling the Housing and Homelessness Crisis:

- \$60 million more in ongoing funding every biennium for homeless services and prevention, developing and preserving affordable housing, and providing homeownership opportunities for low to moderate income families.
- \$5.2 million for emergency winter housing and shelter.
- \$2.0 million for communities around the state to study their housing needs and develop plans to address the housing crisis locally.

Improving Community and Mental Health:

- \$2.2 million to improve reimbursement rates for residential mental health services across the state.
- Over \$2 million to tackle the opioid crisis and direction to the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission to create a strategic plan to combat addiction and promote recovery.
- Nearly \$1 million to improve student access to school-based mental health services.
- Nearly \$1 million to improve access to care for adults in psychiatric crisis.
- \$5 million for two facilities to help improve access to secure adolescent inpatient mental health care and inpatient and outpatient addiction services.

Bolstering Rural Communities:

- \$1.8 million for the Bradshaw Drop Irrigation Canal Project in the Rogue River Valley.
- \$250,000 to help rural schools provide students with access to transit.
- \$1.0 million for the development of the Hermiston Community and Workforce Development Building.
- \$300,000 to eastern Oregon counties for grants to help with economic development.
- \$500,000 to the Local Economic Opportunity Fund to aid financially distressed communities with community economic resilience planning.
- \$500,000 for the Port of Cascades Locks Economic Recovery Fund to finance infrastructure and business recruitment following the devastating fire season.

Improving Environmental Protection

- \$1.5 million for the Carbon Policy Office to study the economic impact of a cap-and-invest program, understand any impacts on traded sector industries, and examine ways to utilize Oregon's forests and fields to sequester and store carbon.
- \$1.0 million to the Department of Environmental Quality to clear a backlog in air quality permits.
- Allow for the expenditure of \$500,000 to expand Oregon's greenhouse gas reporting program.

Investing in Higher Education:

- \$39 million in bonds for the expansion of academic facilities on the OSU-Cascades campus.
- \$20 million in bonds to support the University of Oregon's Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact.
- \$9 million in bonds for Eastern Oregon University's dual academic and community fieldhouse.
- \$3 million for the Oregon State University Northwest Marine Renewable Energy Center to develop the nation's only wave energy test site.
- \$2.8 million to replace two failing boilers at Southern Oregon University.

Supporting Public Safety and the Judicial System:

- \$2.7 million for tuition assistance to Oregon National Guard members to support recruitment and retention of Guard members.
- \$150,000 to reimburse Multnomah and Hood River Counties for emergency expenses from the recent fire season.
- \$8 million to stabilize hours for Oregon's courts and support public defense services.
- \$400,000 in budget authority to the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to train first responders in mental health and crisis intervention.

###