



**SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE
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Press Contacts:

Tess Seger, Tess.Seger@oregonlegislature.gov

Hannah Kurowski, Hannah.Kurowski@oregonlegislature.gov

Major Wins on Housing and Homelessness for All Oregon Communities

Governor signs new laws that address the root causes of homelessness and work fast to build more affordable housing

SALEM, Ore - Joined by legislators who championed affordable housing and homelessness solutions during the 2023 Legislative Session, Governor Tina Kotek signed into law [House Bill 3395](#), [Senate Bill 611](#), [House Bill 3042](#), and [Senate Bill 5511](#). These new laws address the root causes of homelessness and work fast to build more affordable housing.

“This is a huge step forward for Oregon,” said **Senator Kayse Jama (D - Portland), chair of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development**. “Oregonians are clear that progress on the affordable housing and homelessness crisis needs to happen now, and that’s exactly what we’re doing. These solutions are going to make a big impact in every corner of the state.”

“Every Oregonian deserves to have access to safe and affordable housing in the community of their choice,” said **Representative Maxine Dexter (D - Portland), chair of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness**. “The steps we took in the 2023 session move us closer to this goal and will set the state up for long-term success.”

Housing Supply & Stability Investment ([House Bill 3395](#))

A [shortage of homes in Oregon](#) is a root cause of our homelessness crisis. House Bill 3395 addresses this by cutting red tape for housing siting and construction and by allocating a total of \$48.5 million from the General Fund to support various [projects](#).

The bill achieves the following:

- Removes barriers to producing more affordable housing by allowing construction in commercial zones, streamlining the approval process and making it easier to build on land owned by public utilities;
- Reduces restrictions on diverse housing types like condominiums, duplexes, single room occupancies, and multi-family buildings with a single stairwell;
- Gives grants to local governments for technical support in developing needed housing
- Provides flexibility in zoning regulations to accommodate residential areas and grants to local governments to assist with technical support;
- Issues funding to help low-income college students access affordable housing options;
- Provides grants to develop housing projects that cater specifically to agricultural workers within local communities;
- Helps with grants for cities, counties, and tribes to aid in housing and community development initiatives;
- Matches revolving loan funds for certain home buyers to increase the equity they can accrue; and
- Allocates funds to establish programs that guarantee loans for affordable housing projects.

“As a rural and coastal legislator, I know our communities need support and solutions like these that get to the root of the problem. I’m proud of the bipartisan work we did to rethink how we can get more housing off the ground and more Oregonians housed in all parts of the state,” **said Representative David Gomberg (D - Lincoln & Western Benton/Lane Counties)**, co-chief sponsor of House Bill 3395.

“I hear from too many families in my district that the safe, affordable housing they need just doesn’t exist. I’m excited to see these investments hit the ground and change Oregonians’ lives for the better,” **said Senator Deb Patterson (D - Salem)**, sponsor of House Bill 3395 and member of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development.

“When you’re in a crisis, you have to get creative and think outside the box. These innovative solutions are going to make a real dent in our housing shortage and put stable, affordable homes in reach for more Oregonians,” **said Senator Mark Meek (D - Clackamas)**, supporter of House Bill 3395 and small business owner.

“As a working, single parent in a district deeply impacted by the housing crisis, I know that many families are living paycheck to paycheck. This legislation is going to give us more options and help drive down costs for working Oregonians,” **said Representative Annessa Hartman (D - Gladstone, Oregon City & N Clackamas County)**, member of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

“Our commitment to fixing the homelessness and affordable housing crisis isn’t just talk – this budget demonstrates our commitment to making real progress. These investments are going to create change that Oregonians will see and feel in their day-to-day lives,” **said Senator Janeen Sollman (D - Hillsboro)**, member of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development.

“We stayed laser focused on housing affordability and delivered this session. This is how we show up for Oregonians and give them more housing options at a reasonable price they can afford,” **said Representative Emerson Levy (D - Bend, South Redmond, Tumalo & Sisters)**, member of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

Homelessness Response & Prevention ([Senate Bill 611](#), [House Bill 3042](#), [Senate Bill 5511](#))

Oregon has experienced a sharp increase in rent due to lack of housing and inflation, which has caused a large uptick in eviction rates. Current law allows for rent to be increased up to 7% plus inflation. Senate Bill 611 will stabilize rents by adding a cap at 10%, keeping thousands of Oregonians housed.

House Bill 3042 provides protections for Oregonians who rely on subsidized housing. It prioritizes the preservation of affordable housing as federal protections expire by creating a three-year safe harbor period for renters living in these units. This will keep more Oregonians in their homes.

Senate Bill 5511 is the budget bill for the Housing and Community Services Department and will help the state respond to the state’s homelessness crisis. It includes [a total budget of over \\$2.5 billion and 441 positions](#), a 28.5% increase from the current service level.

Some highlights of the budget are:

- \$136.8 million for wildfire recovery efforts, supported by a \$422 million federal grant;
- \$111.2 million for continuing shelter and rehousing services in response to the Governor's emergency declaration on homelessness;
- \$24.1 million for operating support to existing shelters;
- \$55 million for rental assistance, building off of the prior \$26 million passed from the Affordable Housing & Emergency Homelessness Response Act;
- \$6 million for eviction prevention and tenant resources;
- \$7.5 million for down payment assistance;

- \$2.5 million for foreclosure avoidance counseling;
- \$2.5 million for decommissioning and replacement of manufactured housing; and
- \$9.7 million to establish a predevelopment loan program within the Department.

“Oregon families need stability and certainty, now more than ever. By taking on rent inflation, we’re preventing evictions and homelessness while we get more long term solutions, like building more affordable housing, in place,” **said Senator Wlinsvey Campos (D - Aloha)**, co-chief sponsor of Senate Bill 611.

“SB 611 will help prevent displacement. Kids deserve to stay in schools; families deserve to stay in their communities. If kids are continually priced out of their schools, then we as legislators are the ones with a failing grade,” **said Representative Andrea Valderrama (D - Outer East Portland)**, co-chief sponsor of Senate Bill 611. “It’s about what we can do today as we build for tomorrow. At a time when Oregon is experiencing some of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, we cannot afford to let rent spikes go unchecked.”

“We have a housing emergency on our hands, and it’s our job to do everything in our power to keep Oregonians in their homes. People are facing rent increases of up to 14.6% this year, that’s not sustainable. By keeping rents reasonable, we’re providing Oregon families the breathing room they need to make ends meet,” **said Senator Sara Gelser Blouin (D - Corvallis)**, co-chief sponsor of Senate Bill 611.

“Rent is rising faster than paychecks. Families, seniors, and vulnerable Oregonians who are at risk of homelessness need stability and relief. This is about preserving existing affordable housing and investing in critically needed housing development and services. Passage of these bills will prevent homelessness before it starts, which is critical to our response to the housing crisis.” **said Representative Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville, Sherwood, King City, Tigard/Bull Mountain & Parrett Mountain)**, a co-chief sponsor of Senate Bill 611 and House Bill 3042.

“We’re looking at the bigger picture and responding to the housing crisis on all fronts: We’re addressing homelessness and getting people into shelter, preventing more homelessness by preserving existing affordable housing and stopping evictions, and we’re setting the stage for Oregon to build more housing,” **said Representative Ricki Ruiz (D-Gresham)**, co-chief sponsor of House Bill 3042. “This sets the stage for the 2024 session and the impacts will be felt for years to come.”

Tackling the affordable housing and homelessness crisis is a major priority for Democrats in the Oregon Legislature. Senate Democrats prioritized solutions to the crisis in their [2023 Oregon Works Agenda](#), and House Democrats included it in their [Rebuilding for the Future Agenda](#).

Both caucuses are committed to continuing this work in 2024 and beyond until every Oregonian has a safe, permanent place to live.

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