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NEWS RELEASE

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Public entity liability reform bill moves out of Senate committee
SB 311 raises liability limits for state and local government over seven years

SALEM – Legislation that raises caps on tort claims brought against the state and local governments passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee this morning. SB 311 will increase compensation limits under the Oregon Tort Claims Act.

“This is good legislation that addresses a real problem for both public bodies and the public at large,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), chair of the Committee. “The limits set today are reasonable, appropriate, and redress a long standing problem.”

SB 311 is a product of the Tort Claims Task Force that met over the 2008 interim in response to a Supreme Court decision in the case *Clarke v. OHSU*. That case highlighted what were deemed unacceptably low limits for public entity liability.

“This was a group effort,” said Prozanski. “Because of the input and cooperation of the diverse interests at the table, we were able to find common ground and draft legislation that had a broad degree of support.”

The bipartisan task force included both members of the House and Senate as well as four public members representing stakeholder groups including OHSU, Oregon Trial Lawyers Association, local governments and consumers. Today’s bill also calls for convening a Tort Claims Task Force to meet in 2014 to revisit the issue of public entity liability.

SB 311 is expected to move to the Senate floor sometime next week.

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