



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Senate approves contingency plan to help rural counties provide services**

*HB 2206B enables state to help counties conduct elections, collect revenue, and carry out other services*

SALEM—Today the Senate approved a contingency plan to help rural Oregon counties in financial distress because of expiring federal timber payments. House Bill 2206B, which passed on a unanimous vote, enables the state to directly help counties to conduct elections, collect revenue, and carry out other services under emergency conditions.

“We cannot wait any longer for the politicians in Washington, D.C. to help distressed counties in Oregon. Southwest Oregon faces a looming financial disaster, and we need a plan immediately to ensure that rural counties can still provide the most basic level of services,” said Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), chair of the Senate Rural Communities and Economic Development Committee. “Residents of these counties still need law enforcement protection and services for veterans and vulnerable citizens. This bill gives the state the ability to step in and help out.”

The bill allows counties experiencing fiscal distress to request a declaration of emergency from the Governor. In the case of a declared emergency, state agencies may coordinate with counties to provide elections services, revenue collection, and veterans services to county residents.

“We have a responsibility to maintain public safety and other critical services throughout Oregon,” said Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), who represents parts of Douglas and Lane Counties. “Oregonians in rural counties depend on basic services, and it’s our job to step in with relief in case of an emergency. HB 2206B will make sure that state officials and local governments can coordinate in fiscal emergencies to protect the health and safety of these distressed communities.”

The provisions of the bill allow the state to continue coordinating these services until the county determines there is no longer a fiscal issue, or until two years after the initial declaration of an emergency.

“Partnering with counties to protect funding for critical services will enable long-term economic growth in rural areas, which is a top priority for Senate Democrats,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “This bill marks an important step toward strengthening rural Oregon communities and promoting economic growth across the state.”

House Bill 2206B now moves to the desk of Governor John A. Kitzhaber for his approval.

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*For more information on the Senate Majority Caucus, please visit [www.orsenatemajority.org](http://www.orsenatemajority.org)*

