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**OREGON SENATE REPUBLICANS**  
**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Senate Republicans Drive Bipartisan Agreement on Special Session to Address Housing, Drought, and Public Safety**

SALEM, Ore. – After repeated failures by Oregon’s housing department to timely implement a rental assistance program, Senate Republicans have pushed for a bipartisan agreement to fix the problem and protect landlords and renters.

“When we first started, we were miles apart,” said Senate Republican Leader Tim Knopp (R-Bend). “We were not willing to entertain coming in to pass legislation that we believed would do long-term damage to the rental housing market. Senate Republicans have voted numerous times to extend rental protections over the last 2 years. We weren’t interested in doing it again unless we had a bipartisan deal that would fix the problem at the housing department and ensure housing providers would be made whole.”

As part of the agreement, \$5 million will be directed to the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) to speed up the processing of assistance applications. \$10 million will be placed into the Landlord Guarantee Fund, which will ensure housing providers are made whole if a renter who applied for assistance is not eligible. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program will be replenished with \$100 million to ensure those who have already applied will get assistance. The assistance application portal may reopen to spend any additional money left over. Another \$100 million will go to local agencies for eviction prevention programs.

The safe harbor provisions passed in SB 278 will be available to renters who apply for assistance by June 30, 2022. Those protections will last until the application is processed, or September 30, 2022, whichever is sooner. Then the program will come to an end.

At the request of Senate Republicans, Monday’s session will also include important emergency legislation to support public safety and clamp down on illegal marijuana operations in Southern Oregon; a \$99.725 million drought package to help farmers and ranchers recover from this summer’s heatwave; money to support incoming Afghan refugees, and affordable housing investment in targeted areas.

“Special sessions are for emergencies,” Senator Knopp continued. “These additional bills will address urgent problems facing Oregonians. The illegal marijuana situation in Southern Oregon is absolutely an emergency. The drug cartels are committing murder, stealing water, assaulting Oregonians, and engaging in human trafficking. Law enforcement needs our support to stop these dangerous operations.

“Oregon’s farmers and ranchers were hit hard by the heatwave this summer. The resources included in the drought package are going to do a lot of good. Our economy relies on a robust agricultural sector. We need to come together for them.

“Many of those who are seeking refuge from Afghanistan risked their lives to help American troops. They deserve our support and help.

“Senate Republicans will be in the Capital on Monday if the language of the legislation being drafted is consistent with these goals.”

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