

**State Representative
Duane Stark
House District 4**



**State Representative
Carl Wilson
House District 3**

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***Sober Facilities Law Passes Oregon Senate
House Bill 2936 Heads to Governor's Desk***

(Salem) [House Bill 2936](#), the measure to establish sober facilities in state law was unanimously approved by the Oregon Senate Monday. [State Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward](#) (D-Portland) carried the bill on the senate floor telling her colleagues that sober facilities, "offer a compassionate alternative to jail and they are more cost effective than clogging up the emergency department." The bill now moves to Governor Kate Brown's Desk for her signature.

Senator Steiner Hayward is a doctor and she serves on the human services budget subcommittee with [Representative Duane Stark](#) (R-Josephine County) one of the main sponsors of [HB 2936](#). "Joining forces with Senator Steiner Hayward and others, I realized this legislation brought together people who care about substance abuse issues from rural and urban parts of Oregon, and from every end of the political spectrum," said Stark. "It has been humbling and rewarding to work with so many legislators around the state to expand sobering facilities as part of our addictions treatment and mental health system."

There have been a handful of sober facilities in Oregon for decades, but they have never been defined in state law. HB 2936 classifies them as clean, safe places for police to take individuals who are acutely intoxicated on alcohol or other controlled substances to stay for a short period of time. Accountability and safety measures are required for these facilities. The new law extends certain civil and criminal immunity protections to sober facilities, but limits the number of new operations that come online after January 2016.

"I'm disappointed we had to restrict the number of new sober facilities," said [State Representative Carl Wilson](#) (R-Grants Pass) the other lead sponsor for the bill. "However, the bill calls for state regulators to report back on the success of these programs so hopefully we can open more in the years ahead, because certainly the need is there and growing all the time."

Grants Pass is one of the many communities working on setting up a sobering facility. Grants Pass Police Chief Bill Landis explained existing policies often make it frustrating for police officers. "Under the current 'community caretaking laws' we are tasked with helping those who are considered a danger to themselves or others, we can't just leave them out in the elements. This legislation is critical because it provides protection for private non-profit entities, just like law enforcement officers and treatment providers, who in good faith, attempt to help these same vulnerable people."

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