



State Representative Duane Stark House District 4

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Rep Stark Credits Southern Oregon Caucus for Grants Pass Sober Center Funding

(Salem) The Grants Pass Sobering Center Project is expected to receive \$500,000 thanks to a budget bill approved by the Oregon Legislature this week. The appropriation was a joint effort of several members of the Southern Oregon Caucus according to [State Representative Duane Stark](#) (R-Josephine County). “This project is a public-private partnership,” said Stark. “The community group building the sober center has done an outstanding job of raising dollars in the private sector and it was my hope to match that effort with dollars from the state. Several legislators in the Southern Oregon Caucus stepped up to the plate to make it happen!”

“Sober centers are a cost effective investment for the state’s human services budget,” explained [State Representative Peter Buckley](#) (D-Ashland), the Co-Chairman of the Legislature’s Joint Ways and Means budget committee. “We have a growing problem with substance abuse in southern Oregon. Sobering facilities can help ease the load on our social service agencies and encourage individuals to get treatment.”

The funds for the Grants Pass project are earmarked for “one-time support for start-up costs”. They are part of the Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) program budget in [Senate Bill 5526](#). That budget bill contained a total of \$6 million for addictions treatment and recovery support which included funding for detox facilities and sober centers around the state.

In addition to Representative Buckley, Stark thanked a number of other key legislators for helping to secure state funding for the Grants Pass project. They include: [Senator Alan Bates](#) (D-Medford), Senator [Herman Baertschiger](#) (R-Grants Pass), [State Representative Sal Esquivel](#) (R-Medford), State [Representative Mike McLane](#) (R-Powell Butte) and [State Representative Carl Wilson](#) (R-Grants Pass).

Earlier this week, [House Bill 2936](#) was adopted by the legislature which establishes sober facilities in state law and outlines their operating parameters. “This funding is a great boost for the Grants Pass Sober Facility,” said Representative Wilson, who joined forces with Representative Stark on HB 2936. “It is my hope that we can build on this momentum and locate an ongoing source of funding for the years ahead.”

The legislative discussion about funding for sober centers began on the first day of the legislative session with a hearing on [House Bill 2671](#) which would have designated certain fees from liquor licenses for a new “Sober Center Support Fund”. That measure was promoted by Representatives Buckley and Esquivel. Representative Stark also pushed for further investigation into how alcohol revenues are spent on human services, such as sober centers, by sponsoring [House Bill 3485](#), and he will continue to work on the issue into the next legislative session.

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