

**State Representative
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House District 25**

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Legislation to Enhance Transparency in Economic Development Tax Breaks Gains Support

(Salem) Information about economic development projects which receive tax incentives from the state would be posted on the Oregon Transparency Website (www.oregon.gov/transparency) under a legislation which is now headed for the House Floor for a vote. [House Bill 2825](#) was unanimously approved by the House General Government and Consumer Protection Committee today.

The measure is sponsored by [State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer, Newberg, St. Paul) and [State Representative Phil Barnhart](#) (D-Central Lane and Linn Counties). Thatcher spearheaded creation of the website in the 2009 legislative session along with other lawmakers. Barnhart is Co-Chair of the House Revenue Committee.

"The state picks winners and losers by deciding which businesses will get these tax breaks and which ones will not," noted Representative Thatcher. "Taxpayers should be able to see where their money is going and whether the benefits promised by these projects are becoming reality."

Representative Barnhart explained, "the transparency website already contains loads of information about all the other components of the state budget, it makes sense to list these economic development tax expenditures and their performance measurements as well."

"This is a major step forward in providing the public the information it needs to hold state programs accountable for results," said Jon Bartholomew, Policy Advocate with OSPIRG. "In this time of cutbacks and limited resources, this bill is needed so the public can see if we are getting the best bang for our buck out of about \$600 million worth of economic development programs. Expanding the state transparency website to include these tax expenditures will add sunlight to a currently opaque area of the budget." OSPIRG just posted a [new report on Oregon's transparency efforts](#).

"This legislation will encourage civic engagement, and confidence in government," said Jodi Wiser from Tax Fairness Oregon. "Putting all the facts on the table is critical to making sound policy decisions which will benefit state decision makers and the taxpayers alike."

"As both a business owner that uses economic development incentives and a citizen of Oregon, I think transparency is a good thing and see no reason to shy away from it," said John Stadter, President and Managing Partner for First Call Resolution in Roseburg. The easier it is for the public to see how well economic development programs work, the better we can understand how much return on investment we get from them. I am glad to see this proposal is moving forward."

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