

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

CARRIER:

Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

REVENUE: No revenue impact (-3)**FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued (-3)****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: None****Action:****Vote:**

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: Cheyenne Ross, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 3/5, 4/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Transfers administration of and funding structure for elderly rental assistance program from Department of Revenue to Oregon Housing and Community Services. Prescribes operative dates. Takes effect 91st day after *sine die*.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Appropriate agency to administer program
- Within OHCS' mission, existing service delivery, and area of program oversight (housing stabilization)
- History of program going back to 1970s; never indexed, so currently only available to those in extreme poverty
- Long transition timeline
- Other alternatives that were considered

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

[-3 amendments adopted 3/31/2015] Aligns dates and removes paragraph for appropriation amount.

BACKGROUND: Senate Bill 296 is the result of work group activity led by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) and the Department of Revenue (DOR), and including the Oregon Law Center and Community Action Partnership. The elderly rental assistance program provides annual rental assistance to low-income seniors, if certain criteria are met, and is only available if the place being rented is subject to property taxes. The property taxes requirement is the only connection the program has to DOR; DOR issues payments, but has no oversight or other resources. The more natural connection for program administration is OHCS. OHCS provides other supports for, and is generally more accessible to, older and low-income adults. The ultimate goal of transferring the program from DOR to OHCS, is to transform it into a more effective and useful tool for those who qualify, and to take advantage of any opportunity there may be to connect low-income seniors to other services.

Senate Bill 296 transfers administration of the elderly rental assistance program from DOR to OHCS.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.