

# Director's Message



June 3, 2015

To our partners:

I write to share some very exciting news with you. On Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, Governor Kate Brown signed into law HB 2442, updating our policy and governance structure.

During our 2013 transition planning process, our engagement with stakeholders led us to understand that the agency had too many diffuse advisory bodies which each oversaw their own programmatic areas, and that service delivery could be improved if the agency was guided by a policy body with a more comprehensive view. As a result, we submitted a bill, [HB 2442](#), to help the agency move towards a more streamlined governance system, and to increase the responsibilities of the State Housing Council. After much work with our partners, we came to consensus amendments and were able to present a final recommendation to the legislature. The bill passed the House and the Senate, and was signed into law by Governor Brown on May 28, 2015, making it effective on January 1, 2016.

HB 2442 makes several critical changes:

- The Housing Council will be renamed to the Oregon Housing Stability Council. The name change reflects the importance of stable housing to everything OHCS does, from foreclosure avoidance, to energy and rent assistance, to the creation of new rental units.
- The new Housing Stability Council will have two additional members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, bringing the total membership to nine. In addition, it will have increased oversight of a state housing plan; will address geographic and racial disparities; and increase oversight of the agency budget, financial plan, and policy direction.
- The bill abolishes and transfers authority from three advisory bodies, the Advisory Committee on Energy (ACE), the Community Development Incentive Advisory Board, and the Interagency Council on Hunger and Homelessness, to the new Council. It is our intention to create a subcommittee to oversee energy policy that will include representatives from our community action partners and utility companies.
- The bill transfers responsibility for leading state policy on hunger to the Department of Human Services. The bill also transfers the role of OHCS with respect to the Oregon Hunger Task Force to the Department of Human Services.

We believe these changes will help the department set policy with more intention. We appreciate the partnership and support of stakeholders in getting to this point, and are looking forward to the transition to the Housing Stability Council in the coming months that will help us do our work better in service to our mission.



Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our legislative team: Rem Nivens, Assistant Director for Public Affairs, ([remmal.nivens@oregon.gov](mailto:remmal.nivens@oregon.gov)) who leads the effort, supported by Alison McIntosh, Government Relations and Communications Liaison, ([alison.mcintosh@oregon.gov](mailto:alison.mcintosh@oregon.gov)) as well as Mike Boyer, Legislative Coordinator ([mike.boyer@oregon.gov](mailto:mike.boyer@oregon.gov)).

I, along with the State Housing Council and the Executive Team, am excited by the passage of HB 2442 and the potential this new law holds for this agency.

Best regards,



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