



Farmworker Housing Tax Credit HB 2154 & HB 3168

Farmworker Housing Tax Credit Program:

Many rural areas in Oregon lack the housing they need for their workers, particularly for farmworkers. The Farmworker Housing Tax Credit (ORS 315.164) is a tool Oregon has used effectively since 1989 to help build housing for farmworkers and their families.

Our communities are better and stronger when we have safe, stable and affordable housing for all our residents. We can ensure everyone has access to safe housing they can afford by maintaining tools to make it easier to build and maintain affordable housing, like the Farmworker Housing Tax Credit. A variety of tools and strategies are needed to create affordable housing opportunities in these communities, and this tax credit has been a proven and effective part of the “toolkit.”

In Oregon, we value our rural communities, our productive farms, and the benefits the agriculture industry offers the state. But, rural areas lack the housing they need to offer people an opportunity to build better lives.

Farmworker Housing Tax Credit Extension: HB 3168

The tax credits under this program are allocated by Housing and Community Services. Tax credits benefit low income farmworker families by ensuring access to affordable rental units. Tax credits also leverage private development resources and help ensure the engagement of lenders in the development of this housing.

The enabling legislation for this critical tool establishes a sunset of 2014. HB 3168 would adjust the sunset — the Housing Alliance requests an extension of at least six years from the current sunset, to 2020.

We urge your support of HB 3168, with a sunset extension to 2020. Thank you for your consideration.

Farmworker Housing Tax Credit Modification of Definitions: HB 2154

The Farmworker Housing Tax Credit (ORS 315.164) is a tool that’s been used effectively for many years to help build housing for farmworkers. However, existing statutes make it hard to meet the needs of today’s farmers and farmworkers.

The definitions used to determine who is eligible for farmworker housing have not kept pace with our changing economy and farming system. The current definition of farm work is outdated. One critical change made by HB 2154 will be to update the definition of farmworker to reflect the ways our farms work now, and to include those that work hard to process and handle crops.

HB 2154 will:

- Update the definition to reflect the ways our farms work now, and to include those that work hard to process and handle crops.
- Permit the existing farmworker housing tax credit program to support farmworker residents living in cooperatively owned manufactured dwelling parks.
- Clarify that owners may sell farmworker housing tax credits to a contributor.
- Clarify that Oregon Housing and Community Services may allocate credits to housing developments on a pro-rata basis, reflecting the number of units in a development that will be dedicated to farmworkers.
- Clarify and simplify the application process, and extend the period during which the owners can apply for credits.

Farmworker housing allows farms to have access to workers and for workers to have access to jobs as well as safe, decent and affordable housing. We urge your ongoing support of this tool through the passage of HB 3168 with a sunset extension to 2020, and the passage of HB 2154. Thank you for your consideration.