

SB 51: Affordable housing preservation to keep Oregonians housed

Preventing displacement before it occurs, statewide



Photo courtesy Community Partners for Affordable Housing

SB 51, together with other preservation bills & funding:

Funds repairs & upgrades to aging affordable housing

Is more cost-effective than building new

Helps thousands of vulnerable Oregonians stay in their homes

Plugs a leak in housing strategy

The issue

Many of Oregon's regulated affordable homes are aging and need major repairs, just like any home. And some privately owned affordable housing is at risk of being lost to the marketplace. Without investment, we risk losing this long-term affordable housing that supports people with lower incomes, including seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, families, and people on fixed incomes.

The solution

SB 51 establishes the Affordable Housing Preservation Program at the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) agency. This will ensure that OHCS regularly assesses and documents the funding needed from the legislature to preserve and operate existing affordable rental housing and manufactured housing parks.

How it works

SB 51 focuses on keeping Oregon from losing the affordable housing we already have, which is an essential part of meeting our overall housing goals. All Oregonians deserve an affordable, accessible place to call home, in the community where they feel at home. This bill would:

- Require OHCS to track the funding that is needed from the legislature for preservation.
- Make clear that certain bonds can be appropriated by the legislature to preserve and operate existing affordable rental housing and preserve manufactured-housing parks.
- Fund training and capacity building to support improved property-management operations and practices, and asset management of affordable housing projects.

We also support the calls for an additional \$100 million in bonds, for a total of \$285 million in preservation funding. In general, we support robust funding that meets a variety of preservation needs, through this bill and others.

Since 1974, 1000 Friends of Oregon has worked with Oregonians to enhance our quality of life by building livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms and forests, and conserving natural areas.



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Before



After

Investment in this affordable housing complex will help it stay in service longer. Photos courtesy Salazar Architects.

Existing challenges

A survey conducted with Housing Oregon identified more than 1,000 affordable homes currently at risk statewide, potentially displacing an estimated 1,900+ residents, even from our small sample of 18 properties across seven cities or counties.

Even within existing preservation opportunities, barriers limit access to the funding needed to preserve affordable homes.

- **Insufficient preservation funding:** There isn't enough to cover all projects, and large capital repairs often don't fit into current funding structures. Many properties deteriorate further while waiting for funding cycles to catch up.
- **Rural properties are often overlooked:** This is either due to funding scarcity or because they don't meet strict "urgent need" criteria.
- **Older properties lack financial flexibility:** Restrictions on rent adjustments, outdated funding structures with no reserve accounts, and limited refinancing options make it difficult to stabilize operations.
- **Economic pressures:** Rising insurance costs, changes in funding programs, and federal cash-flow shifts strain even previously stable properties, delaying critical repairs.

Typical preservation needs

Because preservation challenges and needs are unique to each property, funding should be flexible enough to respond to this variety.

- **Major system upgrades:** HVAC, plumbing, electrical, sewer line replacements.
- **Energy-efficiency improvements:** window replacements, insulation, heat pumps, air sealing.
- **Natural-disaster resilience:** earthquake retrofitting, fire-risk reduction, climate-adaptive improvements.
- **Structural and site repairs:** exterior painting, right-of-way improvements, parking lot repaving.
- **Financial restructuring and support:** refinancing to stabilize struggling properties.

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