

March 18, 2021

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair
House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lucas Hillier and I am the Program Manager for the City of Portland Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 3124.

The Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) is responsible for coordinating the cleanup of campsites in the City of Portland. In addition to coordinating services for individuals in need, we also develop and implement harm reduction strategies within Portland. HUCIRP exists to help reduce the impact of homelessness within the community by creating service navigation opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness while also facilitating the removal of hazardous items and debris from our public spaces.

HB 3124 increases to 72 hours the notice required to homeless individuals before local government agencies remove them from an established camping site and makes changes to the requirements for the removal, storage, or disposal of unclaimed property.

Based on the experience we have gained over the last 6 years running the Impact Reduction Program, the 72-hour posting timeline would create challenges by preventing us from intervening in severe circumstances. The City of Portland currently operates using a 48-hour posting notice and we have found that to be a good balance to provide individuals enough advance notice while at the same time still allowing us to be responsive when necessary. In practice, we typically post a campsite notice on the Thursday or Friday the week prior to scheduled removal activities. There are circumstances where we need to move more quickly and would appreciate retaining that ability in those instances.

Based on our experience, the 90-day storage requirement is not necessary or feasible. Currently, the City of Portland will hold an individual's possessions for 30 days. In the overwhelming majority of instances, people collect their belongings within days of the cleanup. The City would need to triple the capacity of our current 5,500 sf storage facility at a significant cost as it is a leased space (\$80,000 annually).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 3124. We look forward to continuing this discussion.

Thank you,
Lucas Hillier
Luca Hillier
City of Portland