



SB 2385: Property tax software for statewide use

Testimony for House Revenue Committee – Jody Wisner – February 17, 2021

On behalf of Tax Fairness Oregon, a network of volunteers who advocate for a rational and equitable tax code, we offer the following testimony.

SB 2385, directs “. . . the Department of Revenue to develop, implement and maintain a software system that enables online filing and processing of returns and database of information entered in the software system.”

At first glance, Tax Fairness Oregon is encouraged with the SB 2385 goals. SB 2385, Section 1 (b)(3) states “Once the software system is in operation, use of the system to perform any action required under or related to ORS 308.290 shall be mandatory. We assume the intention is to require all counties to use the same system. We have experienced the variations in records among counties, and they make research difficult. One would expect that paying for one system used by all Oregon counties would save money and make information reporting much easier. However, we submit four questions that we suggest need proper consideration.

- We are concerned that this may change public access to property tax records which we and others currently use for various purposes. Property taxes have long been public information, available at best online. We wonder, will SB 2385, if passed as written, affect the current property tax information access or will SB 2385 create a privacy shield on property taxes information that currently doesn’t exist? Case in point, will a taxpayer be able to go online to determine comparable property appraisals and assessments?
- What is the timeframe for transitioning to a new software platform?
- Will the state build or purchase the new enterprise software platform?
- Will counties be financially assisted when transition to the new system occurs or will DOR individually upload the new system and provide staff training for all appropriate county staff?

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our questions.