



**News Release - For Immediate Release
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Housing assistance available for Oregon storm victims

Salem, Oregon – Oregon Housing and Community Services today granted waivers to allow families displaced by the coastal storm to occupy “affordable housing” units without providing income eligibility, Gov. Ted Kulongoski has announced.

“This quick response by Oregon’s housing and community services agency is indicative of the determination of state employees to help bring order into the lives of storm victims,” Kulongoski said. “Again, we applaud the collaboration of state agencies and their partners in serving Oregonians in crisis.”

With the waiver decision, OHCS is identifying and tracking housing units so they may easily be accessed. Updated information is available through: the Community Action Team at St. Helens, 503-397-3511; Astoria, 503-325-1400; and Tillamook, 503-842-5261; along with Kim DeMarcus at OHCS in Salem, 503-986-0975.

Waiver forms are available on the OHCS website (www.ohcs.oregon.gov, click “Winter Storm Response”). More than 240 housing units are now available throughout Oregon. OHCS is working with hundreds of affordable-housing providers to update the list of vacant units.

These housing units were financed with federal tax credits and other federal and state resources. Storm victims will be able to live in these units up to six months while they establish more permanent alternatives.

Much like emergency measures implemented when Hurricane Katrina ravaged parts of the Gulf Coast, permission has been granted by OHCS to owners of low-income housing developments funded with tax credits, federal HOME funds and state bonds to temporarily house displaced families from Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln and Yamhill counties.

Federal and state agencies will waive the normal low-income and/or non-transient housing requirements. Waivers will be granted for a period up to June 30, 2008, in order to expand the availability of housing for disaster victims and their families. Federal approval of the OHCS decision is expected.

OHCS is the state's housing finance agency and community services program administrator. The department provides financial and program support to create and preserve opportunities for quality, affordable housing for Oregonians of lower and moderate income, and administers federal and state antipoverty, homeless, energy assistance and community service programs. For more information, visit our website at www.ohcs.oregon.gov.