

# Mobile home legislation faces uphill battle

One of many affordable options

By MARK MILLER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Mobile homes weren't built to last forever. But state legislators like Rep. Pam Marsh don't want them to just go away.

If you're a mobile home owner who wants to replace your aging residence, you could apply for a state loan of up to \$35,000 to help defray the cost as part of a program Marsh is proposing.

Marsh, D-Ashland, describes manufactured homes as "naturally occurring affordable housing." She believes they are an essential piece of addressing Oregon's affordable housing shortage.

"We've got to really have this multipronged approach," Marsh said. "We are a state missing about 150,000 housing units, so as we go about this, we have to be thoughtful both in increasing the supply and stabilizing conditions for current tenants and investing in what we've got."

As of 2017, about 11% of Oregon residences were manufactured homes, according to the state Department of Housing and Community Services. The typical owner of a manufactured home makes significantly less money than homeowners in general, and manufactured homes generally sell for far less than single-family houses.

However, mobile homes come with their own issues. Most are not built to last as long as a stick-built house or apartment building, and older

too little for the other. "Those things kind of naturally fit together," Marsh said.

## Floating homes

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing mobile home residents in Oregon, however, is that mobile home parks have closed at a rate that has Marsh and other housing advocates alarmed. According to state data, more than 100 parks closed between 2001 and 2015, taking 4,000 mobile home spaces with them.

Portland city commissioners changed land use rules last year to protect 56 manufactured housing communities from being redeveloped, amid a hot market for real estate in the region. Similar fights over development have played out in other cities, as well.

Marsh is proposing a \$9.5 million lifeline for mobile home parks at risk of closing, making that money available in loans for nonprofits and local governments interested in buying them up to keep them open. "We're demonstrating that we know we need to invest in housing that's out there on the ground right now," Marsh said.

HB 2896 carries a \$20.5 million price tag, most of which would pay for loans. It still needs the approval of the state budget-writing committee before it goes before the House and Senate for a vote.

The bill also includes \$3 million to help develop a mobile home park in Springfield, a cause that was taken up by Springfield Democrats Sen. Lee Beyer and Rep. John Lively earlier this year.

Another proposal that is



Mobile homes are an affordable housing option.

a big difference for mobile home park and marina tenants, Marsh and Prozanski's housing proposals haven't gotten the same amount of publicity as a suite of bills introduced by House Speaker Tina Kotek earlier this session.

Kotek said she's continuing to push for that legislation to pass this month, including House Bill 2001, which would effectively end what some housing advocates call "exclusionary zoning" in cities with more than 10,000 residents.

Under HB 2001, such cities would have to allow a duplex wherever it would permit a single-family house. Cities with populations of more than 25,000 would have to allow triplexes, quadruplexes, townhouses and cottage clusters in residential neighborhoods, as well.

The goal, supporters say, is to increase the availability of affordable and "missing middle" housing in Oregon. "Well over half of our residential land is zoned for detached single-family housing," said Mary Kyle McCurdy, deputy director of 1000 Friends of Oregon. That has created what McCurdy calls a "structural mismatch" between the amount of land available for housing and the number of homes that are actually available, she said.

Something like a duplex, McCurdy added, is "is easily the same size as ... a single-family detached home, but it allows two families to live in it," and at a lower cost per household. Not everyone is on board, including some of Kotek's fellow Democrats. "I know that there's a lack of inventory," said Sen. James Manning Jr., D-Eugene. "I'm not thoroughly convinced that, when we talk about affordability, whether or not this will trickle down to the people that actually need it."

Another proposal from Kotek, House Bill 2003, would require more extensive planning by local governments on housing. It would also open the door for hous-

ing to be built on public land, as long as it's in a residential area and isn't designated as a park or open space. It has the backing of 1000 Friends of Oregon as well.

Like Marsh's manufactured housing bill, HB 2001 and HB 2003 are awaiting budget-writers' go-ahead.

Along with Prozanski's marina legislation, two more of Kotek's bills passed out of the budget committee Friday. House Bill 2002 sets up a fund to preserve affordable housing and adds new requirements before publicly supported housing can be converted to market-rate housing. House Bill 2006 provides grants to improve access to housing for low-income individuals and survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. They go to the House floor for consideration.

*The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group, Pamplin Media Group and Salem Reporter.*

## Alvin and Loretta (Larson) Grothe



Alvin served as Pastor of Bethany Lutheran church until his retirement.

Their children are Terry (Jeff) Owenby, Gresham, OR; James Grothe, Ogilvie, MN; Susan (Mike) Lynch, Medford, OR; Kathy (Larry) Olson, Astoria, OR; Kelly (Lois) Grothe, Astoria, OR; Joel Grothe, Tillamook, OR.

The couple have 15 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

Cards of congratulations will reach them at 2775 Steam Whistle Way #205 Astoria, OR 97103



will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with an open house in their honor on Saturday June 22, 2019 at Bethany Lutheran church, 451-34th St., Astoria, from 1-4pm.

They were united in marriage on June 21, 1969 at Bethel Covenant church outside of Roseau, MN, with Rev. Kronberg officiating.

The couple moved to Astoria in 1975 where

**'WE'VE GOT TO REALLY HAVE THIS MULTIPRONGED APPROACH. WE ARE A STATE MISSING ABOUT 150,000 HOUSING UNITS.'**

Rep. Pam Marsh, D-Ashland

mobile homes weren't built to modern standards for energy-efficiency or safety.

CASA of Oregon, a Sherwood community development nonprofit that supports Marsh's legislation, told lawmakers it can cost as much as \$20,000 just to decommission and dispose of an old mobile home, especially if it contains asbestos. For homeowners on low or fixed incomes, that cost can be prohibitive, leaving them with little choice but to stay in a home that has reached the end of its lifespan.

Originally, Marsh proposed separate loan programs: one to assist people getting rid of an old mobile home, and another to help them pay for a new, more environmentally friendly mobile home. In the latest version of her proposal, House Bill 2896, the two are condensed into a single fund. She's trying to meet mobile home residents' needs, she explained, so she doesn't want to provide too much money for one program and

moving forward in the Legislature, Senate Bill 586, changes the law to treat residential marinas similarly to mobile home parks, including more protection for tenants.

Oregon has about 1,500 registered floating homes, many of them in rented slips similar to mobile home spaces. Like mobile homes, floating homes are often a more affordable alternative to houses in riverside communities. Also like mobile homes, floating homes are endangered by redevelopment.

SB 586, which was introduced by Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, at the request of a constituent, has broad backing from both marina landlords and tenants. Angela Garvin, a marina tenants' rights advocate who lives in Portland, testified that the bill "will save good, invested community members from losing their homes and life savings for no good reason."

## Affordability questions

While they could make

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## HOMESTAY LODGING PERMIT APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 30, 2019

Beginning July 1, 2019 operating a homestay lodging rental without a permit or providing false information on an application will result in a fine of \$1000 per-day. Astoria homeowners with an existing business license and transient lodging tax collection must also submit a permit application.

*Business licenses alone do not complete the homestay lodging permit requirements.*

Go to the Homestay Lodging Link ([http://astoria.or.us/HOMESTAY\\_LODGING.aspx](http://astoria.or.us/HOMESTAY_LODGING.aspx)) on the City website for the homestay lodging permit application packet. Visit City Hall on Tues, Wed and Thurs from 1-4PM, call **503-338-5183** or email [comdevadmin@astoria.or.us](mailto:comdevadmin@astoria.or.us) with questions or to submit your application.



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