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## **E-building permit program among 31 bills to simplify regulations**

(Salem) — Government agencies have submitted 31 bills to the 2007 Legislature that will make it easier and less expensive for businesses to understand and meet state regulations without reducing standards and protections. The bills are part of Governor Kulongoski's package of regulatory streamlining bills.

"The regulatory environment is a major factor in attracting and retaining businesses in our state," said the Governor. "Through my regulatory streamlining initiative, we have taken large steps in making our rules and regulations easier to follow and these bills build on our efforts to make Oregon a better place to do business."

The Office of Regulatory Streamlining, part of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, worked with the individual agencies on the bills, which deal with issues such as professional licensing, fees, and business and personal tax filing.

The legislative package includes House Bill 2405, which creates the nation's first statewide e-building permit program. The program would save businesses time and money by allowing them to conduct building department business — including applying for, paying for, and receiving building permit approval — online morning, noon, and night, with any city or county in the state. The program would be administered by the Department of Consumer and Business Services, Building Codes Division. *The bill will have its first hearing before the House Business and Labor Committee on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 3 p.m. in Hearing Room D in the State Capitol.*

"This statewide program will build on the success of our popular e-permitting service, which allows contractors to buy permits online from several jurisdictions," said Cory Streisinger, director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services. "Expanding that program and adding even more building department services online will save contractors a significant amount of time and money."

Several of the bills would reduce the regulatory burden for Oregon's small businesses. For example:

- House Bill 2291 reduces the minimum nursery license fee and allows the Department of Agriculture to exempt small producers from the assessment.
- House Bill 2207, developed by the Employment Department, exempts more very small employers from unemployment insurance reporting by raising the wage threshold.

Consumers also will benefit from the regulatory streamlining bills. House Bill 2077, proposed by the Landscape Contractors Board, would allow licensed landscape contractors to subcontract simple work related to a landscaping project, such as building a deck or gazebo. Currently, consumers must hire a separate contractor to do these types of projects.

A complete list of the bills is available on the Office of Regulatory Streamlining Web site, [www.oregon.gov/DCBS/RSL/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DCBS/RSL/index.shtml).