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Central City Concern Contributes to Statewide Changes in Water Use

Portland, OR – On Friday, June 12th, Governor Ted Kulongoski signed HB 2080 into law effectively legalizing the use of greywater. Soon any property owner will be able to harvest wastewater from bathing and laundry, treat it and use it for irrigation or other outdoor uses. This bill follows changes to the Oregon building code over the last year to allow greywater treatment and use inside of homes and buildings. Over the next year, the Department of Environmental Quality is expected to lead an effort to implement a greywater use permit process to reflect the new usage standards.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Jackie Dingfelder, and Representative Ben Cannon, follows on the heels of a two year-long process led by Central City Concern (CCC) to achieve more water conservation in and reduce water pollution of multifamily buildings. CCC formed a “water team” with SERA Architects, Interface Engineering and Gerding Edlen Development Co. to examine water reuse strategies and explore regulatory changes that would make a building ‘water independent’. The team’s meetings with state and local jurisdictions helped define complexities and opportunities for the beneficial use of wastewater and the regulatory change needed in order to do so. HB 2080 was a result of the water team’s analysis and these meetings.

The water team’s work resulted in a detailed report – ***Achieving Water Independence in Buildings*** - sponsored by Central City Concern, The Bullitt Foundation, Enterprise Community



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Partners, Cascadia Region Green Building Council, and Portland Development Commission; it can be viewed at www.centralcityconcern.org/news.

Central City Concern manages more than 1,400 units of affordable housing in the Portland area and spends more than \$1 million on gas and electricity bills alone. “We see enormous potential for both energy *and* water conservation,” said Ben Gates, project manager and architect for CCC. “Approximately 30 to 40 percent in water savings can be realized with the application of greywater reuse systems in multifamily buildings.”

Central City Concern, with support of Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., is currently embarking upon an energy and water audit of all its buildings in order to achieve a 20% reduction in building utility costs by end of 2010. In 2007, CCC completed a renovation project on the Estate Hotel that reduced its carbon footprint by 55% through a combination of energy efficiency measures and replacing the heating system. Estimated cost savings on utility bills is \$25,000/year.

Central City Concern’s mission is to provide pathways to self-sufficiency through active intervention in poverty and homelessness. CCC manages affordable housing and provides health, recovery and employment services to more than 13,000 of individuals in the Portland metro area every year.

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