



Changing lives
Building communities
Creating opportunities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 17, 2009

Press Contact:
Carole Romm, Central City Concern
Director, Community Partnerships & Strategic Development
cromm@centralcityconcern.org, 503-200-3879

GREYWATER IS GREEN AND AFFORDABLE

The pursuit of more affordable housing expands statewide water reuse possibilities

Portland, OR – Thanks to the efforts of Central City Concern (CCC), a Portland-based non-profit affordable housing provider, new and expanded water conservation options are now available for buildings in Oregon. CCC's recently proposed project, a sustainable and affordable apartment building, highlighted restrictive regulations that prevent significant savings in water use, and the reduction of the associated financial burden for their low-income tenants. A new report by CCC shows how their work has helped direct statewide regulatory change. **Commercial and residential buildings in Oregon are now allowed to use rainwater and greywater.**

This groundbreaking work puts Oregon in the top tier nationally among a handful of states with progressive water regulations.

Central City Concern teamed up with SERA Architects, Interface Engineering, and Gerding Edlen Development Co. to develop the building. "Two questions helped us focus our initial efforts: 1) How can we help our low-income clients save money? And, 2) What's the greatest challenge of a truly sustainable building?" said Ben Gates, Project Manager at CCC. The answer: *water independence*.

A *water-independent* building would harvest rainwater, and all of its wastewater – greywater and blackwater – for reuse. This would eliminate both the use of municipally-supplied water and the outflow of stormwater and sewage off the property.

Central City Concern's report, "Achieving Water Independence in Buildings," explains water reuse strategies and what current regulations allow. It was instrumental in seeking **rainwater and greywater** allowances in Oregon and may offer guidance for those in other states wishing to do so.

"By using reusing water before we give it back we can achieve a 30-40% water savings by implementing what is allowed today," according to Lisa Petterson, Associate at SERA Architects. Under the new allowances, Central City Concern expects to reduce its municipal water consumption by up to 3,400,000 gallons annually and reduce sewage sent to the municipal treatment plant by up to 3,200,000 gallons annually.

Lately, their work has taken on a life of its own. On Monday, March 16 the Oregon House of Representatives voted to pass House Bill 2080 to advance greywater use (49-10). If passed by the Oregon Senate, the bill will pave the way greywater use outside of buildings by 1) establishing a legal definition for greywater; 2) encouraging the appropriate reuse of greywater; and 3) instructing the State DEQ to establish a permit for greywater use and disposal outside of buildings.

Central City Concern's pioneering work was supported by The Bullitt Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, Cascadia Region Green Building Council, and Portland Development Commission.

For more information and to download a copy of the report, please visit:
<http://www.cascadiagbc.org/lbc/resources/water/oregon>

For more information about Central City Concern, please visit:
<http://www.centralcityconcern.org/>

###