



Commissioner Nick Fish  
City of Portland

## MEMO

May 10, 2011

To: Members of the Analysis of Impediments Committee  
Portland Housing Advisory Commission

From: Nick Fish, Housing Commissioner  
Margaret Van Vliet, Director, Portland Housing Bureau

RE: Update on Fair Housing

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Portland aspires to be a city where basic human rights are as common as our winter rain. My team at the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) and I work each day to improve equity, but we'll never know how we're doing until we test ourselves. That's why we commissioned a fair housing audit.

We were all disturbed by the results. When it comes to equal access to our most fundamental need - shelter - Portland is not yet the city to which we aspire.

Confronted with evidence of bias and discrimination, PHB Director Margaret Van Vliet and I are taking action.

The Portland Housing Advisory Commission (PHAC), PHB's advisory body, is analysing the audit results. This week, they will complete their analysis and submit final recommendations to us. Their recommendations will include: enforcement of the Fair Housing Act laws, education and outreach, additional audit testing, and a strengthened fair housing oversight committee.

We'll continue to invest in partners like the Fair Housing Council of Oregon, Metro Multifamily Housing Association, and the Community Alliance of Tenants, which do the work to educate tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities regarding fair housing laws.

Before the people of Portland entrusted me with this office, I was a civil rights lawyer. What I know most clearly from that work is that the job of ensuring equal access is never done.

With outreach, education, and targeted enforcement, we'll continue our relentless effort to confront the basic injustice of depriving someone of a place to call home.