



March 7, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Aaron Woods and Representative David Gomberg  
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic  
Development

VIA OLIS

Re: Support for HB 5019

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg, Members of the Committee:

As you know Washington County is the second largest county in the state of Oregon, with over 600,000 people residing within the County. Since 1990, the county's population has nearly doubled in size, most recently our population has grown at a rate equivalent to 19 people moving in every day. This population expansion has made us one of the most rapidly growing and most diverse county in the state.

Rapid growth comes with significant efforts to find housing for all members of the community, such as our land use and transportation department's comprehensive planning to our community development department's support for those facing homelessness to our housing department's working to develop and maintain affordable housing units and providing supporting services.

Washington County invested and worked locally to directly address the needs of our houseless population in a comprehensive manner. In the last two years, we have added 170 year-round shelter beds and 150 winter shelter beds to expand our ability to provide emergency shelter. Last year, we helped 1000 people out of homelessness into permanent housing through a multitude of services including outreach, housing navigation, move in and permanent rent assistance, and are now providing wrap around supports and retention service to help make sure these 1000 residents in Washington County can keep their housing.

Key to our work is the partnerships between the regional counties, cities and community based organizations in developing not just the infrastructure but the programmatic responses that provide long-term supports needed by the community.

HB 5019 is a furtherance of that partnership, adding the state as a bigger partner to the local work we are accomplishing. The financial investment in programs and facilities is necessary in meeting the additional goals for funding one-time projects that are vital components to addressing the needs of the houseless community.

The additional funding from HB 5019 will help us to double down on our current work, helping to launch more permanent shelters, create more permanent housing placements and ensure long term stability supports that permanently end homelessness. We are confident that we can more than achieve the state's goals for Washington County in 2024 to:

- increase shelter capacity with 60 new shelter beds,
- place more than 100 formerly homeless people in housing,
- and prevent homelessness for more than 800 people with eviction prevention.

However, long-term solutions require long-term funding plans. As we continue to develop the infrastructure and programs that are needed to address this acute need, there must be a plan for maintaining the successes we establish. Programs that can meet people where they are, stave off houselessness, and provide the supports to individuals need certainty that funding will exist well into the future to prevent another crisis needing emergency action.

Washington County supports HB 5019 and looks forward to the future conversations on how to create stable, long-term funding for these programs.

Sincerely,

Marni Kuyl, MS, RN

Assistant County Administrator