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CITY OF  
**PORTLAND, OREGON**

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PORTLAND HOUSING BUREAU

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Representative Carolyn Tomei, Chair  
House Human Services and Housing Committee  
900 Court Street NE, Hearing Room D  
Salem, OR 97301

February 22, 2013

Dear Chair Tomei and Members of the Committee,

The Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) is committed to solving the unmet housing needs of low income Portlanders. We do this by using a range of tools to address the full continuum of housing needs, from homelessness to homeownership. The economic crisis has exacerbated these needs, making it more difficult for low-income Portland families to achieve the dream of owning their first home. PHB's Homebuyer Opportunity Limited Tax Exemption (HOLTE) program directly addresses this need. HB 2349 extends the sunset date to 2025, which under the current statute is scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2015.

Since 2005, HOLTE has been integral to providing affordable homeownership for Portland families who have been priced out of the market. Failing to extend the sunset date for the Single Family Limited Tax Exemption would eliminate this tool that benefits both families and communities. Portland's HOLTE program finances single-family homes by reducing property tax costs for ten years. The benefits go directly to the homeowner, helping families that cannot afford a home in the private market to become homeowners. This means that a family of four earning \$60,000 per year can afford to own a 3 bedroom home in Portland by allowing parents who work in sectors like retail or childcare to save up to \$3,000 annually. At the last count in 2011, 2,064 Portland homeowners were benefitting from HOLTE, providing essential stability for both families and low income communities.

HOLTE has the added bonus of stimulating the recovering homebuilding industry by expanding the market of who can afford to buy homes. Many of our non-profit partners such as Habitat for Humanity and Proud Ground use HOLTE to construct new single family homes. Without the program they would either have to build fewer homes or only serve families with higher incomes. For example, HOLTE helps Habitat for Humanity provide homeownership to families earning less than 50 percent of the median family income – which is impossible in the private market.

The dream of homeownership for middle and low income families has become increasingly difficult. The HOLTE program is a particularly effective tool in addressing this trend, both benefiting families and the wider community. For these reasons, I ask that you vote to extend the statutory authority of this program for 10 years, to January 1, 2025, and support HB 2349.

Respectfully,

Traci Manning  
Director, Portland Housing Bureau

**SVABODA COURT – DEVELOPED BY PROUD GROUND, JULY 2012**

Located at SE Holgate and SE 122nd

