



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

February 24, 2015

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair

Re: SB 5513 – Oregon Housing and Community Services Budget - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a position on Meeting Basic Human Needs that states, “State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.”

The League supports the retention of housing and anti-poverty programs within the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department. The elimination of many boards and consolidation to one overall board makes for administrative efficiency. We commend the agency for the reduction in staff and the work to close out the federal recession programs. We support the rental housing preservation and expansion since there is such a shortage within the state, as well as the additional bond request for \$100 million for new rental housing.

The delivery of services within the local Community Action Agencies has been very effective. The anti-poverty programs of rental assistance, energy assistance and emergency housing have been critical to our very low income people. Weatherization programs have helped people stay in their own homes. The Food Bank programs have been heavily used during the recession and fit with the other anti-poverty programs. The transfer to the Department of Human Services may not be the best move. The programs within this agency utilize community volunteers, which save in low staffing costs.

The League encourages the legislature to continue to fund these programs for families and individuals who do not have sufficient income for safe housing, utilities, and food. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Robin Wisdom in cursive.

Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in cursive.

Karen Nibler
Social Policy Coordinator