



Val Valfre – Testimony in Support of HB 3082

Making sure success continues

Good afternoon Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee,

My name is Val Valfre. I serve as Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Washington County. I also serve as a board member on Oregon Opportunity Network and as a member of the State Housing Council. I speak to you today with my Washington County hat on.

Washington County joins other affordable housing advocates and local jurisdictions in support of HB 3082. It's an adjustment to current law that is needed to provide local communities flexibility and to make sure families who are close to housing stability continue on that successful pathway.

In Washington County we believe that families and children prosper in life, at work and at school when they can access the stability of a home. As a result, Washington County in 2010 passed the nonprofit affordable housing tax exemption ordinance to increase the availability of stable affordable housing for low-income families and children.

While this exemption has been successful, low-income families that currently work hard to earn a livable income can quickly exceed the 60% area median income threshold (currently \$41,600 for a family of four) that qualifies them for an exemption. Instead of encouraging a positive work ethic, these families are often displaced into the accelerating high rents of the private market and the loss of family housing stability.

While Washington County is a growing and prosperous county, the growth is far exceeding the housing supply, particularly affordable housing, where the market reflects a very tight 2% vacancy rate. **Instead of increasing housing instability by displacing families who have succeeded in moving out of poverty but now earn over 60% AMI, Washington County supports offering a smoother transition for these families to move toward homeownership or private market housing by offering jurisdictions an option to increase the threshold up to 80% AMI (i.e., \$55,500 for a family of four).**

As you've heard from Oregon ON, its members and from other counties, HB 3082 provides an important tool for local jurisdictions in their efforts to support increased housing opportunity.

We urge the House Human Services and Housing Committee to support HB 3082. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.