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April 20, 2015

**\$100 Million for Housing:
A vital step toward housing stability for Oregon families**

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the Human Services and Housing Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of HB 2198, including the -1 amendment regarding significant new investment in housing for families.

We urge you to support the Governor's proposal for \$85 million in General Obligation Bonds and \$15 million in Lottery Backed Bonds, which would be deployed in 2017 and subsequent years to provide increased housing opportunity for low income families with children. This new and more flexible funding source will unlock creativity and leverage resources at the local level, while avoiding the major project cost driver of compliance with federal restrictions.

Leaders across Oregon recognize that we cannot meet any of our long-term health or education goals when 20,000 of our children are homeless. It is unacceptable that we have veterans who served our country unable to access a stable place to call home. The estimated total gap across the state is 50,000 homes. We can and must take action to increase access to housing for lower-income Oregonians.

It will take a variety of policy tools as well as increased resources to tackle our state's housing crisis. We need both long-term and immediate investments to build, rehab and preserve affordable housing of all types – including manufactured homes, multifamily rental housing and single-family homes, and also seeking out new, innovative ways to provide housing. Coordinated wrap-around services are also needed to help families and individuals succeed.

In addition to immediate investment in the 2015-17 budget and common-sense policy changes in this and future sessions, committing to \$100 million in future bond investment will allow us to build a foundation for stability and success in Oregon. While this new bond investment will not meet all the affordable housing needs in our state, it is an exciting and essential first step. We urge you to seize this opportunity to significantly increase housing opportunity for low-income Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Miller'.

John Miller
Executive Director