



CASCADIA ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
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May 6, 2015

Capital Construction Sub-Committee of Ways and Means
Oregon Housing and Community Services Bond Package

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Read, Members of the Committee:

I am Margaret Jonsson, Senior Director of Housing Development and Management at Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare. We provide housing and services to people with mental health challenges throughout the state of Oregon. I am sure you are aware of the number of individuals with chronic mental illness that are improperly housed in jails, prisons, and hospitals that cost much more to build and operate than affordable housing. In addition, many of people with serious mental illness are homeless and unhealthy, raising the cost of all medical care.

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal to build Oregon's future by supporting a historic investment of \$100 million for affordable homes for families with low incomes.

On a wider scale than just the people Cascadia serves, we know that our communities can't succeed without homes. Yet, there is only one affordable home for every four households managing extremely low incomes; 20,000 children experienced homelessness in 2013-14; and housing costs are rising 3% to 8% year over year, forcing choices between basics like food, utilities, health care or medicine, and child care.

We can help solve this problem by building homes affordable to families with low incomes. In the process, we can strengthen Oregon's communities, and boost local economies. The proposed \$100 million housing development bond package will allow us, as a housing developer, to be innovative, flexible and sensitive to our community needs. Statewide, the funds will build an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 new homes, which could affordably house 12,000 to 16,000 people. We look forward to seeing the impact we could have here in the Portland-Metro area.

My organization, and my community, like dozens of communities throughout the state, is ready to unleash the ingenuity, innovation and hard work that has defined Oregon for centuries. We can choose to invest in people and create a better future for the next generation. We urge your careful consideration of, and support for, this proposed historic investment in homes for Oregon.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Jonsson", written over a white background.

Margaret Jonsson

HEALING, HOMES, HOPE