

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 Michelle Clawson of Coquille, OR. I have worked with low income families in an economically depressed area for 20 years. I currently work for South Coast Head Start as a family Advocate. 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.

We know that our communities can't succeed without homes. I have watched as families with small children slip into homelessness and despair. The need for affordable housing in our area is great and often families are willing to live in horrible conditions just to have a roof over their heads.

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 Coos Counties 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 Coos County. [Helping](#) families to purchase an affordable home or get into a livable rental can provide desperately needed stability. This will allow families to work, educate their children, and feel secure knowing they have a safe warm place to return to each day.

Here's an example from Bill Hall, Lincoln County Commissioner:

"The Governor's proposed investment in housing opportunity has us in Lincoln County imagining building a much brighter future. We are excited for the opportunity to partner to create more housing opportunities for hard-working families. The historic \$100 million in state bonds will leverage local resources and capacity that we have identified or created in Lincoln County. For example, I imagine that land that has been secured by the Lincoln County land trust could be made available for development of new homes for families. Our Community Development Corporation, Northwest Coastal Housing, has buildable parcels in Toledo and Lincoln City, and is excited about the possibility of leveraging those resources with this state investment. For the safety, economic vitality, environmental health and diversity of our communities, people of all income levels need to be able to live close to where they work, learn and play."

My organization, and my community, like dozens of communities throughout the state, is ready to unleash the ingenuity, innovation and hard work that have 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,
Michelle Clawson