

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Interchurch Center, Suite B ■ 0245 SW Bancroft Street ■ Portland, Oregon 97239
phone (503) 221-1054 ■ *fax* (503) 223-7007 ■ *Web site* www.emoregon.org

May 7, 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:

My name is Jan Elfers and I am the Public Policy Director for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO). Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of religious denominations, congregations and community-based cooperative ministries. We represent hundreds of Oregonians in every rural and urban community throughout the state. Our social principles affirm the right of safe and affordable housing for all. I am writing to express EMO's 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. 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. 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 Oregon.

As people of faith, we are responsible to create communities where everyone belongs, where diversity is valued, and where the dignity of the most vulnerable is safeguarded. We are committed to a society where all people have the opportunity to achieve their full human potential and to thrive. Oregonians 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.

Sincerely,

Jan Elfers
Public Policy Director
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon