



# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF JACKSON COUNTY

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May 7, 2015

Attn: Capital Construction Sub-Committee of Ways and Means

Re: Oregon Housing and Community Services Bond Package

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

I am the Director of Development at the Housing Authority of Jackson County located in Medford. 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.

The Housing Authority is tasked with developing new housing options throughout Jackson County, expanding our rental assistance programs, and implementing family self-sufficiency and tenant service programs that give families in our community the tools to succeed.

Oregon's communities lack affordable housing. Some, including Medford, are facing vacancy rates of less than one or two percent in the rental housing market. This causes extreme hardships for low-income individuals and families, particularly families raising children.

Presently, the Authority's Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers waitlist is more than three years long with more than 5,000 applicants/households, equating to over 10,000 people waiting for affordable housing. More than half of applicants are families with children. Those lucky enough to reach the top of the Authority's Section 8 Vouchers wait list, however, are now finding it more difficult than ever to utilize the assistance due to a severe lack of available rental housing. In fact, over the last twelve months, the success rate of voucher recipients actually finding available housing has steadily declined from 80% to less than 60% due to a shortage of units. Meanwhile, our waitlist continues to grow with little relief in sight.

A lack of living wage jobs combined with a severe shortage of affordable housing options has created a crisis for Medford and Jackson County families with low income. This crisis creates a ripple effect throughout our community with negative impacts to our schools, workforce, and local economy.

Oregon House Bill 2198, as proposed, directly aligns with the Housing Authority's mission by directing our state's housing agency, Oregon Housing and Community Services, to develop and implement a new Affordable Family Housing Development Program to expand the state's supply of affordable housing suitable for and available to families with children whose incomes are below 60 percent of area median income.



The Governor's proposed \$100 million housing development bond package will allow the Housing Authority, as a housing developer, to be innovative, flexible and sensitive to our community's 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 witnessing the impact this proposal could have right here in Medford.

We urge your careful consideration of, and support for, this proposed historic investment in homes for Oregonians, and to Jackson County families who need it.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

*Jason Elzy*

Jason Elzy  
Director of Development

