



OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL
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May 7, 2015

Capital Construction Sub-Committee of Ways and Means
Oregon Housing and Community Services Bond Package
House Bill 2198

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

On behalf of the City of Medford, I am writing to express our 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 City of Medford currently partners with the Housing Authority of Jackson County to address affordable housing needs for the vulnerable and low income population in our community.

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

But 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.

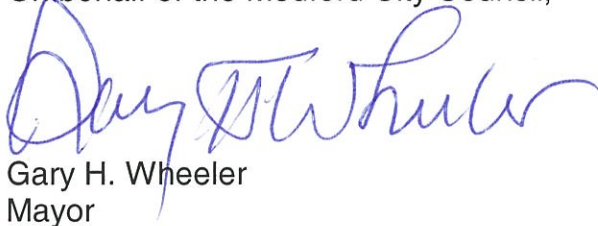
Presently, the Jackson County Housing Authority's Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers waitlist is more than three years with more than 5,000 applicants/households, equating to over 10,000 people waiting for affordable housing assistance. More than half of the applicants are families with children. Those individuals and families that are receiving Section 8 vouchers are now finding it more difficult than ever to utilize the assistance due to a severe lack of available rental housing.

Oregon House Bill 2198, as proposed, directly aligns with the Housing Authority's mission and the City Council goal to address affordable housing shortfalls in our community. 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.

We urge your support of House Bill 2198 as this will assist the City of Medford and communities across the State to begin to address housing for our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your service and consideration of our request.

On behalf of the Medford City Council,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary H. Wheeler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being particularly prominent.

Gary H. Wheeler
Mayor