

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 a resident of Lincoln County, Oregon, living between Toledo and Newport. 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. 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 Oregon, particularly in Lincoln County.

The Oregon coast is considered by many to be a real paradise, because of the natural beauty and unlimited recreational opportunities we have here. However, the hard truth is that our coastal communities are facing a recession that the rest of the state does not seem to feel. We have a growing tourist and retirement community that frankly drains our resources and raises the cost of living to levels that the working residents cannot afford. Additionally, we have a growing immigrant population that helps serve the tourist industry. Many coastal landlords take advantage of this and have set rents so high (as an example, I know of one landlord who is charging 6 immigrants \$800/person/month to share a one-bedroom apartment) that many people can no longer afford to live here. I work at Newport High School and we have many families who have been evicted; our homeless student population is growing. I would hope that your proposed investment might find a way to the coast, to help us alleviate our low-income housing shortage.

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,

Elizabeth Fox  
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