



May 18, 2015

Honorable Mark Hass, Chair
Senate Committee on Finance & Revenue
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Hass and Committee Members:

My name is Derenda Schubert, PhD, and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of Bridge Meadows. Bridge Meadows is an intentional, intergenerational community designed for families adopting children from foster care and seniors living on a limited income. In this affordable housing community, a sense of community is developed providing permanency, a sense of belonging and improved health and well-being for all three generations. The organization welcomed people home in April 2011. During that short period of time, Bridge Meadows has received national recognition (i.e., PBS NewsHour, Newsweek, Eisner Prize for Intergenerational Excellence) for innovation and the positive health and well-being outcomes.

Today, I write to encourage careful review and support of HB 2130 which would allow local jurisdictions to add criteria or program elements that are consistent with the state statute allowing property tax exemptions, where the local jurisdictions allow it. By giving municipalities this ability, more localities will be willing to participate in the program, which furthers the ability to provide much needed affordable housing. HB 2130 creates healthier guidelines for affordable housing projects based on the different needs of municipalities. It can be too much of a risk for cities to participate in affordable housing, and this bill helps more cities participate giving organizations like ours more opportunities to add affordable housing in Oregon.

Without these changes, the only avenue available to cities in managing their tax exemption programs to sunset or repeal program, and future projects may not be viable. The tax exemption is a critical tool for assisting with the financing of affordable housing projects. The tax exemption is supportive to the operating pro formas allowing more funding to flow for critical services to the residents. Furthermore, when a municipality provides such a tax exemption, it indicates that there exists local support for purposes of leveraging other financing. Our Board of Directors and leadership recognize how a community such as Bridge Meadows meets the City of Beaverton's Community Vision to bring together the generations and create more affordable housing for seniors, and we also recognize that cities should be able to have reasonable expectations of its partners.

Please support the proposed legislation in HB 2130. This will provide an opportunity for Oregon's seniors and families to have access to safe, high quality affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Derenda Schubert, PhD
Executive Director

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Derenda Schubert, Ph.D.

Executive Director