



March 6, 2017

Dear Chair Hass and members of the Committee on Finance and Revenue:

I write on behalf of Oregon Opportunity Network (Oregon ON), the statewide association of affordable housing and community development nonprofits, to urge your support for SB 1. Oregon ON strongly supports SB 1, which will create an income tax credit for the operation costs of housing for agricultural workers.

Oregon ON is proud to be a lead partner in the Agricultural Workforce Housing Coalition, a diverse group of agriculture, housing, and community groups who are working together with the shared goals of supporting a strong agricultural economy and providing safe, decent affordable housing for the families who put food on our tables.

Oregon ON's housing authority and community development members, from Forest Grove to Medford, from McMinnville to Ontario, are currently providing safe, stable, affordable community-based housing for farmworkers and their families – and we would like to provide more homes, to meet the huge unmet need around the state.

The Agricultural Workforce Housing Operations Tax Credit created by SB 1 is a new income tax credit modeled on the existing Agricultural Workforce Housing Tax Credit. The existing credit, which supports the development of housing for our agricultural workforce, is efficient, effective, and fully subscribed.

The new credit will preserve and create additional housing options for agricultural workers by incentivizing existing owners of on-farm housing to preserve and improve their housing. In addition, for community-based organizations like Oregon ON's members, this will create new opportunities to leverage existing and new sources of capital to create more housing in rural communities.

Safe, decent housing means fewer workers are homeless or live in inhumane conditions. For farmworker families, as for all families, children's success in school and life is tied to having a stable home. We know that we are currently meeting only a small percentage of the need statewide. This leaves families and workers sleeping in cars, under bridges, or in fields. Or, it means that growers don't have workforce available when the crops are ripe.

Please support SB 1 and provide additional, much-needed support for agricultural workforce housing.

Thank you very much for your consideration, and for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1.

Sincerely,



Jerome Brooks
Executive Director

Oregon ON member organizations:

Statewide

CASA of Oregon
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare
Catholic Charities
Enterprise Community Partners
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Housing Development Center
NOAH (Network for Oregon Affordable Housing)
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Central & Eastern Oregon

Columbia Cascade Housing
Community Connection of NE Oregon
Housing Works
NeighborImpact
UGMW Nonprofit Development Corporation

Coastal

Northwest Coastal Housing
Community Action Team, Inc.

Southern Oregon

ACCESS
Housing Authority of Jackson County
NeighborWorks Umpqua

Willamette Valley

Catholic Community Services Foundation
Community Home Builders
Cornerstone Community Housing
Farmworker Housing Development Corporation
Housing and Community Services of Lane County (HACSA)
Integrated Supports for Living, Inc.
NEDCO
Polk CDC
St Vincent de Paul of Lane County
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services

Portland Metro

Bienestar
BRIDGE Housing
Central City Concern
Community Housing Fund
CPAH
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Home Forward
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Authority of Washington County
Human Solutions, Inc.
Innovative Housing, Inc.
NAYA Family Center
PCRI
Portland Housing Center
Proud Ground
REACH Community Development
ROSE Community Development
Sabin CDC

...Plus over 100 businesses, government agencies, community organizations and individuals across Oregon who support our mission.