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March 20, 2017

Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee On Transportation and Economic Development
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
By email to: jwmtr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the 2017-2019 Oregon Housing and Community Services Department budget request. I am writing on behalf of NeighborWorks Umpqua, a nonprofit community development corporation serving Southern and Southwestern Oregon. NeighborWorks Umpqua works in rural communities to increase people's access to housing, financial resilience and to build local economies and community engagement.

NeighborWorks Umpqua works closely with Oregon Housing and Community Services in our efforts to increase opportunities for housing within rural Oregon, and to provide housing counseling, financial coaching and individual development accounts for our community members. We hope the members of the committee will support the work of Oregon Housing and Community Services through fully funding the important work they accomplish. Housing is a critical need in every Oregon community and without the important programs of OHCS we turn our backs on those people desperately in need of housing and housing security.

We would also like to voice our support of our new OHCS Director, Margaret Salazar. Director Salazar came into an agency in dire need of leadership and bold vision and started delivering on day one. With the support of her leadership team and staff, she has already started the process of tackling some of the most longstanding issues identified in the most recent audit of the department. Director Salazar deserves the support of our industry and the legislature as she tries to address the complex and immediate needs of Oregonians through OHCS programs. We ask that you support Director Salazar with the resources she needs to keep the department moving forward.

OHCS is a vital partner in addressing the housing needs of Oregonians. We ask that you approve a budget that provides the foundation for self-sufficiency and upward mobility – a safe place to call home.

Sincerely,

Stacey Daniel
Director of Policy and Advocacy
NeighborWorks Umpqua



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[Insert name]

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