



HOUSING ALLIANCE

March 20, 2017

Joint Ways and Means Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 5012, Housing and Community Services Budget

Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Gomberg, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support for HB 5012, as well as to identify several additional needed investments in the agency's budget in order to address current housing needs.

First, the Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than eighty organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices from including residents, local jurisdictions, non-profit housing developers, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table.

The Oregon Housing Alliance has identified several priorities within the HCS budget that I want to highlight for you today, and that previous speakers have also identified:

- First, two critical programs, the Emergency Housing Account and the State Homeless Assistance Program, also known as EHA and SHAP, which provide needed support to prevent and end homelessness across Oregon. As you know, in 2016, the Legislature invested an additional \$10 million into these programs. Those dollars have been critical at helping to meet basic needs for shelter across Oregon. We are requesting that the Oregon Legislature make an investment of \$50 million this biennium.
- Second, the Local Innovation and Fast Track Housing Development Program, or LIFT. This innovative and exciting new housing development program will build 965 units across Oregon with the initial investment of \$40 million provided by the Oregon Legislature in 2015. The Governor's Budget proposes \$60 million, and we are requesting consideration of an investment of \$100 million in General Obligation bonds to provide an infusion of needed supply of safe and stable homes across Oregon. In addition, we would ask that you consider an allocation specifically for homeownership. We have

partners across Oregon who can demonstrate this funding mechanism will work for homeownership to serve Oregonians with low incomes and provide them with a permanently affordable home.

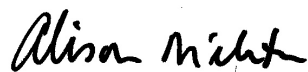
- Third, the critical work to preserve our existing affordable housing across Oregon. In times when we have extreme shortages of affordable housing, it is important to both increase the supply of the affordable homes we have, and to ensure we keep every affordable home we have today. We cannot afford to lose this precious resource. The Governor's budget contemplates an investment of \$10 million in lottery bonds for this effort. Based on projections of need across the state to preserve housing with federal rent subsidies, public housing, and manufactured home parks, we are requesting the Legislature consider an investment of \$100 million.
- Fourth, the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance program. Since 2011, the Legislature has provided a small amount of funding to sustain access to counseling and legal assistance for people facing foreclosure. We know that access to these basic services prior to mediation creates an extremely successful formula. For people that do access counseling, they are able to enter into counseling sessions extremely well prepared and over 70% of them come to some agreement with their lender to keep their home.
- Lastly, we want to express our support for the Department's request for additional staff capacity. It is critical that we support this agency to provide leadership, technical assistance, and essential staff resource to achieve their mission.

Investing in preventing and ending homelessness, new affordable homes, and our existing affordable housing infrastructure is critical at this time when far too many Oregon families are experiencing housing instability. We have a strong network of service providers, affordable housing developers and public housing authorities across Oregon. With these additional investments, we could build more affordable homes for the Oregonians who need them.

These investments in the basics – a safe, stable, affordable home for Oregonians with low incomes – have positive ripple effects across our state. We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits. Kids are stable in school and able to focus on the things that matter – being kids, doing their homework – and not worrying about where their families will sleep at night. Parents are able to focus on work and taking care of kids. Everyone's stress decreases and health improves. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

Thank you very much for your time this morning, and we are looking forward to working with you this session as you seek ways to address our housing crisis across Oregon, and to create opportunity through safe and stable homes.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
A Community Together (Lane County)
Aging in the Gorge
Benton County Health Department
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Hillsboro
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
Common Ground OR-WA
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Energy Project
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Evolve Property Management
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
Impact Northwest

JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Momentum Alliance
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Nightingale Public Advocacy Project
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Authorities
Oregon Law Center
Oregon Opportunity Network
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Tenants United
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Transition Projects
Urban League of Portland
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services