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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,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the 2017-2019 Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) Department budget request.

My name is Sheila Greenlaw-Fink, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Community Housing Fund (CHF) in Washington County. CHF is dedicated to securing new sources of capital in order to provide flexible financial support to community partners who work to create and preserve affordable housing for low-income families and individuals in Washington County.

We work with nonprofit developers who typically complete early project feasibility and due diligence, or purchase land, with our assistance, and then move forward to secure other local, state and federal resources in highly competitive funding rounds. There are few cases where these projects are not dependent on the funding provided by, and the work performed by staff at OHCS. The capacity of OHCS staff to work responsively with a variety of other public and private partners is critical to the completion of affordable housing projects. We urge you—particularly at this time when so many Oregonians are struggling to find affordable, stable housing—to provide OHCS the resources it requires to operate efficiently and effectively.

The OHCS Director, Margaret Salazar has provided new energy and vision at a time when the agency truly needs it—to respond to a critical audit, as well instability in housing and financial markets. Without stable housing, Oregonians cannot thrive, at school, at work, at home, or in the community—everyone needs a safe place to call home! By working together at the state and local levels, we can help provide that critical base for success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila Greenlaw-Fink".

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink
Executive Director