



We build strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter.

May 11, 2017

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Dear Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer, and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. I am writing to share our organization's strong support for SB 5505, as it pertains to expanding LIFT funding.

In a short period of time, the Local Innovation and Fast Track housing program has stimulated the increased development of new affordable housing. Please give strong consideration to funding the LIFT program at the \$100 million level recommended by Speaker Kotek. Please include \$20 million for homeownership, so that together, we can build for Oregon's future.

Habitat for Humanity helps families to achieve stability by building and selling them a key asset: their home. Habitat homeowners pay down an average of \$50,000 in mortgage principal during the first 10 years of ownership, facilitating the very real intergenerational transfer of wealth. We have a proven track record of helping to close our state's minority homeownership gap. Over 10% of the households we serve have at least one member with a permanent disability. The average median income of Habitat homebuyers statewide is 39%. That's \$22,000 in annual earnings for a family of four. Thanks to Habitat's diligent homebuyer selection process and thorough financial education, our mortgage repayment rate exceeds 98%.

This fall, Habitat for Humanity of Oregon conducted a statewide homeowner impact study that highlights the educational benefits experienced by the children living in Habitat homes:

- 63% of the children we serve received better grades after moving into their Habitat home.
- 92% of the children raised in Habitat homes graduated from high school, exceeding Oregon's high school graduation rate by 17%.

The children of Habitat homeowners also experience improved health outcomes, receive higher adult earnings and are far more likely to become homeowners themselves.

Habitat for Humanity homeowners achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build a better life for themselves and their families. Statewide, Habitat homeowners pay an

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon

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estimated \$1.32 million in property taxes each year, supporting local schools and infrastructure—and enhancing the communities we all share.

Even as we celebrate these successes, we are committed to doing more to address our state's housing crisis. Our communities become stronger as we unite to meet our friends' and neighbors' basic needs for a place to call home.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of designating increased general obligation bonds in support of the LIFT program, and for the important work that you do every day.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon M. Vilhauer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director