



Creating affordable housing and healthy communities

May 12, 2017

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

Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services **supports SB5505**. General Obligation Bonds will make it possible for nonprofit housing developers to increase the supply of affordable housing in Oregon. The Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) affordable housing program is an exciting and innovative tool to create more affordable units, including homeownership units.

For the past 15 year, WNHS has helped over 1,150 households purchase their first home and has educated and counseled over 3,800 families about the home-buying process in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services has also successfully built and sold eight Community Land Trust homes. The barrier to developing more community land trust homes is financial. The LIFT program will create an opportunity for homeownership developers to build modest size homes for low-income first time home-buyers. There is very limited housing inventory in our region, especially for first time homebuyers , who must often compete with investors. Additional resources are needed to develop affordable homes. Many families are prepared for homeownership but are priced out of heated housing markets around the state.

We need the Legislature to allocate General Obligation Bonds for LIFT to help meet our state's housing needs, in order to create opportunity for all Oregonians. Our communities are stronger when everyone has a safe, stable place to call home, and increased opportunities for homeownership is critical to meeting this goal.

We urge you to vote yes on SB5505

Thank you for your service to our great state!

Sincerely,

Brigetta Olson
Deputy Director

