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Testimony on SB 5530 May 19, 2017

AARP urges you to increase the amount of lottery bonds authorized to be issued for Oregon Housing and Community Services Department to preserve existing affordable housing in SB 5530. The amount we support is \$100 million per biennium.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social welfare organization with a nationwide membership of nearly 38 million and 500,000 in Oregon. We work to improve quality of life for all as we age, strengthen our communities, and fight for the issues that matter to Oregon families. An important aspect of our work is advocating for livable and age-friendly communities, including expanding housing options, and ensuring access to affordable, safe, secure, and accessible homes for all Oregonians.

Affordable and accessible housing is fundamental to quality of life for people of all ages and abilities, family compositions, incomes and backgrounds. However, the reality of a safe, secure and comfortable home for many families in our communities is in jeopardy due the unprecedented housing crisis in our state. It certainly is so for many older Oregonians - from metro areas to rural communities.

Currently thousands of affordable homes throughout the state are at risk without new reinvestment. Loss of units has real and grave implications. Thirty-six percent of residents in HUD-assisted and Rural Development-assisted housing are older adults. For older adults, loss of a home can mean loss of community ties, displacement, and even premature, unnecessary and costly institutionalization.

As the older adult population is projected to grow, it is anticipated that the number of low-income older adults will also grow. And we also know that the incidence of housing cost burdens also rises with age as incomes fall. We need your leadership to meet our state's housing needs and to create opportunity for all Oregonians through stable, safe, and affordable housing. We must preserve existing affordable homes to be able to do this. Preservation funds made available through SB 5530 can be used to support critical types of affordable housing, including rental housing built with public subsidies, public housing, and manufactured home parks.

On behalf of the over half million AARP members ages 50+ statewide, we urge you to take action today to preserve affordable homes and increase funds for preserving affordable housing in SB 5530. As Oregon faces a housing crisis, we cannot afford to lose any of our affordable housing units. Through reinvestment, we can ensure these properties remain affordable, livable, and available for those who need it most: seniors, people with disabilities, and families just starting out.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to make our region an age-friendly and livable place for people of all ages and abilities.

Real Possibilities