



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

Feb. 2, 2018

To: House Committee on Human Services & Housing,

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice Chair Barreto, Vice Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee:

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 HB 4144.

This year Oregon Habitat for Humanity affiliates reached an important milestone. Together we have made the dream of stable and affordable homeownership a reality for 2,000 Oregon households. We are committed to doing still more.

Habitat for Humanity helps families 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 41%. That's \$24,000 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%.

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

All 28 Oregon Habitat for Humanity affiliates are licensed contractors. As well as mobilizing community volunteers and future homebuyers to build homes with sweat equity, Habitat for Humanity hires licensed and bonded subcontractors to install key features, such as plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems. We also often subcontract out critical home repairs, like replacing a roof that has aged out of usefulness.

One obstacle Habitat for Humanity and other organizations providing affordable home construction and repairs frequently encounter is a lack of available subcontractors—

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon

P.O. Box 11452, Portland, OR 97211 • tel(503)206-5248 • fax (503)206-7456 • habitatoregon.org

especially in rural communities. In many Oregon communities, the relatively small construction workforce results in project delays and increased costs.

For these reasons, we hope that you'll support HB 4144 to help grow the base of Oregon's subcontractors. This initiative will help Habitat for Humanity to attract and retain qualified business partners, engaged in the important work of building and repairing workforce housing.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of HB 4144. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon and the 28 Habitat for Humanity offices building and repairing homes statewide, thank you for your service.

Respectfully,



Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director