

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of House Joint Resolution 201
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
February 6, 2018**



Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

As you know, Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services including land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

In 2008, Metro and our local partners in the Portland region agreed upon a set of desired outcomes for successful communities, one of which is that the burdens and benefits of growth and change be shared equitably among the residents of our region. Unfortunately, steady population growth combined with a dramatic slowdown in housing construction during the Great Recession has led to rapid increases in housing prices. This, in turn, has exacerbated a long-standing affordable housing problem that disproportionately affects low income households and communities of color.

Within Metro's jurisdictional boundary, one in four renter households spends more than half of their income on housing and there is a shortfall of over 47,000 homes affordable to people earning up to 50% of median family income. Nearly 7,600 students in our region experienced homelessness during the last school year.

While the shortage of affordable, safe, quality housing for our region's diverse residents is a growing problem, resources to address this problem are inadequate. That's why the Metro Council is considering submitting to the voters a bond measure that would provide critical funding to address these urgent needs on a regional scale. Because affordable housing is often built through collaboration with private and nonprofit partners, passage of a ballot measure like the one proposed by HJR 201 could offer the opportunity to leverage public dollars to create much more housing than the public sector could provide alone.

Metro already has experience creating housing through public-private partnerships like those that would be authorized by HJR 201. Our Transit Oriented Development program has long used flexible federal dollars as leverage to spur the development of mixed use, transit oriented developments, including hundreds of affordable housing units. HJR 201, if approved by the voters, would enable Metro and other local governments to achieve similar outcomes on a larger scale with funds raised through voter-approved general obligation bonds.

The Metro Council urges you to support HJR 201. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.