

**Testimony of Metro Councilor Sam Chase
In Support of House Bill 4007
House Committee on Revenue
February 20, 2018**



Chair Barnhart 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 supports HB 4007, and specifically the proposed increase in the document recording fee. Since its inception in 2009, the document recording fee has generated nearly \$95 million in support of increased housing affordability for those most in need, funding emergency assistance, home ownership assistance, and the development and preservation of thousands of affordable homes. Increasing the fee to \$75 would align Oregon with our neighbors in California, and would produce approximately \$112.5 million annually for these critical needs.

As Metro and other jurisdictions work on building capacity to address the increasing need for affordable housing, the document recording fee is a proven tool that can aid those efforts statewide and help us ensure that housing is available for those who need it most.

The Metro Council urges you to support HB 4007. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.