



February 9, 2018

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HJR 201: Relating to proposed amendment to Oregon Constitution
regarding Affordable Housing

Clackamas County supports HJR 201: The Board of County Commissioners supports HJR 201, which would refer a constitutional amendment to the 2018 ballot to allow greater flexibility when local governments spend funds raised by general obligation bonds for affordable housing.

A lack of affordable housing is an issue impacting every community in Oregon, particularly in the Portland metro area. The housing crisis that we are facing today reaches all households and limits housing opportunities for working families, seniors, people with disabilities, communities of color, and low income residents. In many cases, these barriers place additional pressure on those residents in our community who cannot find housing at all.

Clackamas County is working very hard on a number of key initiatives to address the housing crisis. Currently, Clackamas County operates 545 affordable housing units, and in spring 2018 the County will finalize a veteran's transitional housing shelter project, serving 30 homeless veterans at a time. Additionally, the county will initiate a housing coalition that will develop policy goals and key partnerships to tackle housing issues head on.

Clackamas County is also working with Metro and other regional partners to develop a potential regional affordable housing bond for the November, 2018 ballot. Affordable housing projects often involve complex partnerships and arrangements that include funding resources from government, private, and non-profit agencies. However, the Oregon Constitution would currently limit our ability to use general obligation bonds for affordable housing in conjunction with private and non-profit partners. If approved by voters, HJR 201 would make a modest change to address this constitutional barrier and enhance our efforts to address the current housing crisis.

We urge a “yes” vote for HJR 201.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.