



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Ted Wheeler, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Chloe Eudaly, Commissioner

February 22, 2018

Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
900 Court Street NE, HR B
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HJR 201-A

Dear Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee,

We write in support of HJR 201-A, which would refer a constitutional amendment to Oregon voters to give local governments the flexibility to leverage general obligation bonds for affordable housing with other funding sources.

Currently, local governments can use general obligation bonds approved by voters to fund affordable housing, but limitations in the Oregon constitution on local government lending of credit mean the affordable housing must be owned and controlled by a local government. HJR 201-A would establish an exception to this constitutional provision to allow local jurisdictions that secure voter approval of general obligation bonds for affordable housing to partner with private or nonprofit entities that leverage Low Income Housing Tax Credits, private development funding, or other financing.

Allowing local governments to leverage general obligation bond proceeds, such as the \$258.4 million affordable housing bond approved by Portland voters in 2016, will increase the financing available for affordable housing and maximize overall resources. Jurisdictions will be able to consider investing bond proceeds in affordable housing projects with community partners. HJR 201-A ensures jurisdictions using this additional flexibility secure approval from local voters for the bonds and do not exceed a prudent cap on bonded indebtedness. HJR 201-A will help address the immense community need for affordable housing throughout Oregon.

The City of Portland urges your support for HJR 201-A. Thank you for your consideration.

Ted Wheeler
Mayor

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