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March 18, 2020

Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310

Co-Chairs Roblan and Holvey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your leadership and that of Governor Brown and local leaders for taking immediate action through emergency declarations and preventative measures to help curb the growth of this pandemic, provide adequate health care, and save lives. As all our communities adjust quickly to this outbreak to slow the spread of the virus, we must address immediately the emerging needs and impacts to the health, safety, and economic security of all Oregon families and businesses, to avoid long term or permanent harm.

1000 Friends of Oregon focuses on, among other things, ensuring that Oregon's state and local land use and transportation planning and implementation programs deliver diverse and affordable housing and transportation choices for all Oregonians. Stable housing and the ability to affordably access our daily needs are essential to a resilient Oregon. Therefore, our comments address these issues and echo much of what you heard in your hearing today from the Housing Alliance, of which we are a member. It is critical that these resources and policies be focused in communities across the state of all sizes, both rural and urban.

- Keep Oregonians who are housed in their housing. Provide immediate housing stability for people with housing through tools such as:
 - Statewide moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent and suspension of late fees due to lost income from the economic impacts of coronavirus.
 - Increase emergency rent assistance, to both those in the private rental market and to those in regulated affordable housing.
 - Longer term programs to assist renters in making payments over time and to aid landlords in bridging this emergency period.
- Expand emergency housing shelters and support access to them.
 - Increase resources for homeless service providers so they may continue to provide emergency shelter, including keeping open winter shelters.
 - Increase access to motels and hotels to provide shelter, particularly for those at higher risk, including underlying conditions.
 - Establish new shelter locations, including in smaller and rural communities.
 - Increase resources for supportive services to help move people into permanent housing.

- Ensure the housing needs of farm and forest workers are being met. And, ensure that Oregon's rural farm and forest industries have equal and easy access to the aid and policy package(s) being prepared, as they grow the food and fiber we all depend on, especially in times such as these.
- Support the efforts of various federal agencies to provide emergency health care facilities and housing close to the populations that need access to them.

Emergency shelter is not a permanent solution to homelessness. Today, we must address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable populations, and use all the tools available to stabilize Oregon through this crisis. In the long-term, we must continue to ensure that towns and cities of all sizes across the state provide opportunities for more safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Thank you for all of your efforts. 1000 Friends of Oregon supports the steps that will be necessary to achieve these outcomes, and looks forward to continuing to work with you on short and long term policy solutions to provide affordable and diverse housing and transportation choices to all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director