

# ROGUE ACTION CENTER

February 11, 2019

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chairs Noble and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today to urge your support for HB2001, one much-needed step toward addressing Oregon's statewide housing crisis.

Housing is widely recognized as a root cause of many critical issues in Southern Oregon, which is why it was prioritized as the #2 issue impacting the health and well-being of our community in the recently released Jackson and Josephine County joint [Community Health Assessment](#), conducted by local coordinated care organizations, and hospitals.

In the Medford Metro region, which covers most of Jackson County we face a housing vacancy rate that hovers between 1% and 2% and 1 in 3 households are severely cost burdened, paying more than 50% of income on housing. The impact on families can be seen in the 25% of children in Jackson County who are food insecure, and in the fact that the Medford School District had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of homeless students in the state. In fact, 3,400 students in Jackson and Josephine Counties were homeless last year, according to the most recent report by the Oregon Dept of Education.

Local communities are doing all we can to address this complex issue, but we can't do it alone. We need the legislature to take bold action this session on multiple fronts. Medford voted unanimously to pass a construction excise tax to fund affordable housing. Talent is holding study sessions on affordable housing policy tools like inclusionary zoning and a construction excise tax. Grants Pass, Medford, and Talent are looking at zoning code changes that could incentivize housing development. Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass are all seriously looking at ways to expand shelter options for the unhoused in our communities.

HB2001 is one important step of many we must take together until everyone in our state has a safe, stable home. I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 2001 this session. Communities like ours cannot wait any longer for solutions, especially when it comes to the already lengthy process of housing development. If you act now we may start seeing new housing options open up in our community in 3-5 years. If you delay, that time horizon is pushed out and this crisis will deepen and the cost will be felt most by the families, seniors, and workers in rural and small metro communities like ours.

Thank you for listening to community voices across Oregon and for your service on the House Human Services and Housing Committee.



Michelle Glass, Director