



**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 595
SUBMITTED BY SARAH BEAUBIEN, SENIOR DIRECTOR, STEWARDSHIP,
ON BEHALF OF TILLAMOOK COUNTY CREAMERY ASSOCIATION
SENATE HOUSING COMMITTEE
February 18, 2019**

Senator Fagan and Members of the Housing Committee,

The Tillamook County Creamery Association strongly supports Senate Bill 595. The complexities of housing—planning, real estate, economics, and development—are such that they eliminate a one-solution approach to our housing crisis, so we are advocating for multiple actions in Oregon. Over the past several years, community members from all geographic areas and economic sectors of Tillamook County have come together to tackle the crisis. In 2015, the Tillamook County Housing Task Force was established to investigate the issue, engage the local community in a conversation about housing and identify both short- and long-term solutions. The Task Force was able to commission a housing assessment to look at the market conditions, housing need, and provide recommendations on a path forward. “Creating a Healthy Housing Market for Tillamook County” was produced as a result of this joint effort and presented to the community in spring 2017.

“Creating a Healthy Housing Market for Tillamook County” provided evidence for what many in the community had identified intuitively: Tillamook County faces a shortage of housing for all but those with the highest incomes. This housing report identified a variety of challenges to the health of the housing market, including: competition from the vacation rental/home market, a low-wage economy, land supply, lack of housing mobility, and maintenance.

The shortage of attainable housing is an impediment to growing the Tillamook County economy and a strong contributor to out-migration of workers and to local homelessness. As the “great recession” comes to an end around the country, Tillamook County struggles to join the recovery without adequate housing for the current and growing number of low and moderate-wage workers needed in the tourist and agricultural-based economies of the area.



The Tillamook County Creamery Association has been one of the largest employers in the County for over a century and has been a champion of recent efforts to address housing shortages, participating in the Housing Task Force, and contributing financially to help fund the housing assessment. We frequently have scores of open positions in our headquarters that we cannot fill because of lack of housing options. Our talent acquisition and retention program will become more effective when new and existing members of our workforce can secure a stable housing situation.

We are committed to assisting in the implementation of new housing options. We have actively dedicated leadership to the Tillamook County Housing Commission and recently funded the *Housing Needs Analysis*. These actions are a start, but we will need to take additional steps. We strongly support for the proposed legislation in Senate Bill 595, which would allow for up to 30% of a jurisdiction's Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) to be devoted to workforce and affordable housing. We find the proposed use of a limited portion of TLT funds a particularly appropriate funding source for affordable and workforce housing because:

- Many of the affected workers serve in low-paying tourist-related businesses (lodging and restaurants);
- These are hard-working people who simply cannot afford the limited supply of available housing options. As a result, they struggle to find less-than-adequate housing, often many miles away from their places of employment; and
- Many have to pay far too much of their limited income on housing, meaning that there is little money left over for such basics as food, utilities, and health needs.

Thank you, and please vote in favor of SB 595.