



March 23, 2019

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development, Oregon State Legislature

Attention: Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Nathan Teske, and I am the Executive Director of Bienestar, a nonprofit affordable housing developer and owner in Washington County, with properties in Aloha, Hillsboro, Cornelius and Forest Grove. I am writing in support of SB 5512.

My organization owns and operates 507 affordable rental homes, with a focus on the Latino and immigrant populations of our county, including many farm worker families. We provide a safe, stable and affordable home to over 2,000 low-income Oregonians, about half of whom are children. We provide programs and services to our residents, including emergency assistance, youth development, leadership development, and advocacy. And we are also launching a new initiative – Homeownership for Prosperity and Equity (HOPE) – to support communities of color to become homeowners in our county, and build equity and intergenerational wealth. There are almost 14,000 households living in Washington County that do not have access to affordable housing, and many are severely rent burdened. There is a need to support affordable housing at all levels of the housing continuum, so that families and children can have stable lives and put down strong roots in our community.

For that reason, I support a number of policies under consideration. I support resources to prevent or end homelessness, as embodied in the EHA and SHAP programs. *Please* invest in these programs. I support increased funding to develop new affordable housing and to preserve the aging affordable housing in communities around our state. And I support funding for the development of affordable homes for sale, to help families move up the housing continuum, and build assets while also having a stable, affordable home.

This is a critical moment in our state's history, as we experience a housing crisis unlike any we've ever seen. I urge you to step up and commit vital resources to address this crisis. Thank you for time in reading this letter and for your dedication in serving our state as legislators – I know it's not easy.

Sincerely,

Nathan Teske

nteske@bienestar-or.org

220 SE 12th Avenue, Suite A-100

Hillsboro, OR 97123

bienestar-or.org