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**Testimony to the Joint Ways and Means Committee on Transportation  
and Economic Development  
Affordable Housing and LIFT Budget Proposal**

Good afternoon, Co-Chair Manning and Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the Committee.

My name is Trell Anderson. I am the Executive Director of Northwest Housing Alternatives, a community-based, mission-oriented, nonprofit affordable housing provider in Oregon. Our mission is to provide opportunity through housing. Established in 1982, we have nearly 1,900 units in our portfolio and 600 more units in our development pipeline. On any given night, approximately 2,900 people sleep under our roof tops (similar in size to the towns of Sublimity <sup>and</sup> Jacksonville). Some of our properties are for families with children, some for seniors, some for people with physical or other disabilities, some for Veterans, and some properties have a mix of people like this.

Based in Clackamas County, we have a statewide geographic focus with properties in 16 counties, in communities such as Hermiston, Portland, Beaverton, Medford, Gresham, Bend, Salem, Dallas, Hines and Florence; with one of our new projects in Ontario.

I am here today specifically to endorse the budget proposal by Oregon Housing and Community Services for LIFT funding, so that we can create more affordable housing across the state.



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Working in various communities across Oregon, we fully understand the limited resources available in communities such as Hermiston and Florence. I mention these two communities specifically because within the next thirty days, we will break ground on a new affordable housing project in Hermiston financed with LIFT funds. And, we have a proposal into the Department now (and we're crossing fingers) for a project in Florence using LIFT funds.

The groundbreaking of the Hermiston project is noteworthy because the project is financed with the first round of LIFT funds that Oregon Housing offered, and is paired with an urban project in the Gateway area of Portland under a single financial structure that includes federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits - \$15.5 million in total is leveraged from the federal program. This is a new model we created using LIFT funds to develop more affordable housing -- opening more opportunities for tax credit investment -- in rural communities. Affordable housing projects in rural communities are smaller and rents do not support the loans it takes to build new properties. But when paired with a larger urban project, like our Gateway-Hermiston project, tax credit investors can leverage the urban numbers to make the rural numbers work. In addition to 48 family-sized new affordable housing units in Hermiston, we have a \$11 million construction budget there -- which translates into dollars stimulating the Hermiston economy through the purchasing of materials and supplies, and local sub-contracting opportunities. On-going, the annual operating budget is \$280,000 per year, again largely localized to the Hermiston economy.

You can expect a grand opening event about this time next year to celebrate 159 new units in Gateway in Portland, and 48 new units in Hermiston.

Similarly, our pending LIFT application with the Department pairs a property in outer SE Portland with one in Florence, using the same urban and rural model, again leveraging the federal low income housing tax credit program. We *are* extremely excited about the new working relationships established *with* NAYA Family Services in Portland, and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians in Florence. We are hoping that our next urban/rural LIFT project is anchored in Coos Bay, also in partnership with the confederated tribe *s*. We can replicate this model ten times over, depending on the availability of funds.

*urban/rural*

I understand that the Governor is requesting a budget allocation of \$130 million in general obligations bonds for LIFT, and the Housing Alliance, which we are a member of, is asking for \$200 million. We support both of these requests because the more funding we have, the more we can develop. At Northwest Housing Alternatives, and across the nonprofit affordable housing industry in Oregon, we have the capacity to deliver.

On a similar note, I'd like to offer support for the Department's budget request for additional staff. They are doing a great job in partnership to push critical funds out the door into various projects and important programs; they have laid out a new and aggressive strategic plan for housing across Oregon; and they need us to support them with more staffing.

Finally, with 21,000 homeless kids in schools across the state, let's use this LIFT funding, leverage the federal tax credits, and create more homes and opportunities for these kids to determine their own success. It's a proven model – affordable housing creates opportunity and offers stability, in every community across Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

