

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of Senate Bill 5512
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and
Economic Development
March 26, 2019**



Co-Chairs Manning and Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

Across greater Portland, housing costs have continued to rise faster than wages for households below median income, even as the upper end of the market is experiencing stabilized and decreasing housing costs. This growing disparity between stagnant incomes and rising housing costs disproportionately impacts Oregon renters, communities of color, people with disabilities and families trying to buy their first homes. We applaud the Legislature's decisive actions this session to protect tenants, even as we know the solutions to our state's housing crisis require further action.

We face a shortage of more than 47,000 affordable homes for households in greater Portland at or below 50% of the [area median income](#) (\$40,700 for a family of four, or \$28,500 for a disabled individual). This means a majority of low-income renters are rent burdened and struggle to afford basic needs such as child care, utilities and medication.

Last year the Metro Council referred to the voters a regional housing measure to fund 3900 new affordable homes with a \$652.8 million general obligation bond. Voters in all three counties of our region approved this historic public investment in affordable housing. The Council has already approved funding for the first project in Beaverton, and staff across the region are working to fully implement the program in 5-7 years, with 40-60 more housing developments. This is a game-changing investment in the greater Portland region, but one that will not be successful without state programs and partnership. That is why Metro supports SB 5512, a comprehensive approach to funding housing solutions across Oregon.

Here are some of the ways SB 5512 will support our work in the region to prevent and end homelessness, and ensure a stable homes for all families, seniors and people with disabilities:

- \$50 million in on-going funds for the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program,
- \$20 million to protect renters in the private market with information and legal supports,

- \$200 million to develop new affordable homes across Oregon, and
- \$100 million to preserve existing affordable rental housing.

Furthermore, we fully support the Department's request for increased staffing in order to successfully implement the increased programming needed to address Oregon's housing needs. The position authority required is critical to the success of SB 5512.

Thank you for your attention to this crisis, which affects Oregonians across the state, from small rural communities to greater Portland. Metro appreciates your leadership in developing statewide solutions and we urge you to take the next step in stabilizing families across Oregon with the passage of SB 5512.