



HOUSING ALLIANCE

April 15, 2019

Senate Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Heard, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2812, which will fix a minor error made in 2018 in HB 4007.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including non-profit housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Today, we simply don't have enough affordable and available homes for people who need them. Vacancy rates are extremely low in communities across Oregon. People – our neighbors and members of our community – are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. During the last school year, over 21,750 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness at some point during the year.

For background, in 2009, the Legislature passed a bill which created a dedicated, ongoing revenue source for affordable housing through a document recording fee. Since that time, the document recording fee has been a critical tool to provide housing opportunity to Oregonians with low incomes.

The fee, which was increased to \$60 in 2018 through HB 4007, is divided by statute into three purposes:

- 10% of resources go to the Emergency Housing Account, which funds emergency rent assistance in all thirty-six counties across our state through a network of Community Action Agencies. These funds help to prevent and end homelessness.
- 14% of resources go to the Home Ownership Assistance Program, which helps Oregonians access affordable homeownership. The funds are used to support a statewide network of homeownership centers, which provide education and counseling, as well as support access to down payment assistance.
- 76% of resources go to the General Housing Account Program, which funds the development and preservation of safe, stable, and affordable rental housing across Oregon.

In 2013, the Legislature passed HB 2417, which requires 25% of the funds from the document recording fee to serve veterans.

In 2018, when the Legislature increased the document recording fee to \$60, the bill also made a modification to the Home Ownership Assistance Program. Initially, all programs funded through the document recording fee were limited to Oregonians earning 80% of the area median income in the county or less. In 2018, there was a recognition that for people seeking to access homeownership, home prices had increased significantly, and people earning 100% of the area median income were also struggling to access affordable homeownership. As a result, in HB 4007, the Legislature included a change to eligibility specifically for the Home Ownership Assistance Program, the portion of the document recording fee which funds homeownership.

However, HB 4007 contained an error – the change to the eligibility was not made throughout the section of statute specifically related to the Home Ownership Assistance Program. As you will see throughout HB 2812, the bill revises the language “low and very low income” to “households with below area median income”. The terms “very low income” and “low income” are defined in statute as at or below fifty percent of the area median income, and at or below eighty percent of the median income, respectively.

This critical change will ensure homeowners whose incomes are at or below the area median income will have access to resources provided through the Home Ownership Assistance Program.

In addition to this critical change, HB 2812 also makes several changes to rearrange and clarify language, none of which are substantive. It also makes one other change to remove an outdated provision which limits the amount of resources from the account which could be used to develop affordable homeownership. Currently, none of these funds are being used for development, however, this limit was set in statute with the creation of the fee in 2009, and we believe this decision would best be left to Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) and the Housing Stability Council.

We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits, and allows people to build for their futures. Kids are able to focus on the things that matter – being kids, doing their homework – instead of worrying about where their families will sleep at night. Parents are able to focus on work, on family, and on community. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

We urge you to support HB 2812.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh

On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon

211info

A Community Together (Lane County)

Aging in the Gorge

Benton County Health Department

Benton Habitat for Humanity

Bienestar

Bradley Angle

BRIDGE Housing

CASA of Oregon

Central City Concern

Church Women United of Lane County

City of Beaverton

City of Eugene

City of Hillsboro

City of Portland

City of Tigard

Clackamas County

Coalition of Community Health Clinics

Coalition of Housing Advocates

Common Ground OR-WA

Community Action Partnership of Oregon

Community Alliance of Tenants

Community Energy Project

Community Housing Fund

Community Partners for Affordable Housing

Community Vision

Cornerstone Community Housing

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Enterprise Community Partners

Evolve Property Management

Fair Housing Council of Oregon

Farmworker Housing Development Corp.

FOOD for Lane County

Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln County

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon

Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East

Hacienda CDC

Housing Authority of Clackamas County

Housing Development Center

Housing Oregon

Human Solutions

Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

Impact Northwest

JOIN

Lane County Health and Human Services

League of Women Voters of Oregon

Lincoln County

Mainstream Housing Inc.

Metro

Mid-Columbia Housing Authority

Momentum Alliance

NAYA Family Center

Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.

Neighborhood Partnerships

NeighborImpact

NeighborWorks Umpqua

Network for Oregon Affordable Housing

Nightingale Public Advocacy Project

Northwest Housing Alternatives

Northwest Pilot Project

Oregon AFSCME Council 75

Oregon Center for Christian Voices

Oregon Center for Public Policy

Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness

Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

Oregon Food Bank

Oregon Housing Authorities

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives

Proud Ground

Raphael House

REACH CDC

St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.

ShelterCare

Sisters Habitat for Humanity

Sponsors, Inc.

SquareOne Villages

Street Roots

Transition Projects

Urban League of Portland

Washington County

Welcome Home Coalition

Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services