

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Metro Legislative Affairs Director  
In support of Senate Bill 5505  
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
April 12, 2019**



Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, 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, and we know the solutions to our state's housing crisis require further action. This is why I am writing to express Metro's strong support for SB 5505, and the Housing Alliance request for \$200 million in General Obligation, Article XI-Q bonds to build affordable homes across Oregon.

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, utility bills and medications.

Last year Metro Council referred to the voters a regional housing measure to fund 3900 new affordable homes with a \$625.8 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 greater Portland, but one that will not be successful without state programs and partnership. That is why Metro supports SB 5505, a comprehensive approach to funding affordable housing across Oregon.

Since 2015 Oregon has funded more than 2000 affordable homes with the LIFT program using Article XI-Q bonds. This program has proven its efficacy and it is time to increase the capacity of this program. SB5505 will support our work in the region to prevent and end homelessness, and ensure stable homes for all families, seniors and people with disabilities with \$200 million more in bond funding authority committed to the LIFT program.

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 on statewide solutions, and we urge you to take the next step in stabilizing families across Oregon with the passage of SB5505.