

Support the Healthy Homes Pilot Initiative: SB 1532

For seniors, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes, small investments in their homes can make a big difference. Repairs help maintain homeowners' stability, improve health outcomes and protect Oregon's first-time homeownership stock for the next generation.

In our work, especially in rural areas, we see low-income homeowners living in homes that are unsafe and in need of critical repair. They may be forced to choose between paying their mortgage or putting food on the table, and critical home repairs may be beyond their reach. This impacts their ability to maintain good health, stay out of the emergency room, get to work or school and meet energy costs.

Sometimes the need for a critical repair prevents the implementation of cost-efficient, energy-efficiency improvements that lower energy use and utility bills. Advocates stand ready to quickly implement a \$4 million Healthy Homes Pilot Initiative to rapidly address these critical home repair, health and safety needs. We will demonstrate how cost-effective repairs enable individuals and families to lead healthier, more productive lives:

1. Establish the Healthy Homes Pilot Initiative: Half of these funds will be competitively available to qualified nonprofit organizations and local governments through Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) for healthy home repairs. The local organization may choose to offer the funds as a forgivable loan, a grant, or a loan that is repaid over time or upon sale. Both stick-built and manufactured homes will be eligible for health and safety enhancing repairs.

2. Maximize Federal and State Weatherization Programs: The other half of the funds will be paired with energy-efficiency programs delivered by the statewide network of Community Action Agencies. By pairing more flexible Healthy Homes Pilot Initiative dollars with the state and federal weatherization funds, these agencies can efficiently provide critical home repairs while maximizing existing resources.

Advocates are eager demonstrate how this pilot investment of \$4 million will meaningfully improve the health and safety of Oregonians. We are confident that the Healthy Homes initiative will help us to preserve over \$40,000,000 in homeownership assets – largely in rural parts of the state where little or no entry-level homeownership opportunities are under development. Home repairs of this nature also stimulate the local economy by engaging local subcontractors and purchasing materials. Community contributions of volunteer time and donated resources will match each Healthy Home dollar.

