



HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 14, 2020

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance regarding HB 5202. The Housing Alliance requests that you allocate \$50 million in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds for the LIFT program and \$20 million in Lottery Bonds to support the maintenance and preservation of affordable rental homes across Oregon.

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.

Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Housing Program: The Housing Alliance is requesting \$50 million in additional Article XI-Q general obligation bonds for the LIFT Program. By investing in more affordable homes, we create an Oregon with a better future for all of us. Today, our state doesn't have nearly enough affordable places to call home for everyone that needs one. In rural and urban counties across the state, far too many of our neighbors and community members are struggling to make ends meet and must choose between paying rent and affording food, medicine, and transportation for their families.

The Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) housing development program is one of the most innovative tools we have to create more affordable homes. The LIFT program supports the development of affordable housing, with an emphasis on supporting rural communities, communities of color, and families. An additional \$50 million in general obligation bonds for the LIFT program will substantially increase the number of affordable housing units created in our state.

Since 2015, the LIFT program has funded the development of over 2,050 new affordable rental homes, and 147 permanently affordable homes for sale. In 2015, the Legislature established the LIFT program, allocating \$40 million, which provided funding for twelve projects across eleven communities in Oregon. In 2017, the Legislature allocated \$80 million, and OHCS has awarded all of those resources to provide funding for fourteen affordable rental housing projects, building apartment homes in 11 communities across Oregon, as well as affordable homeownership projects, building permanently affordable homes for sale across 13 communities. These homes are being built in small communities such as Astoria, Madras, Hermiston, Ontario, and Klamath Falls, in larger communities like Roseburg, Bend, Redmond, and Eugene, and in the Portland metro.

Capacity: The Oregon Legislature should invest in increased capacity for LIFT so we can continue to take serious action and create more safe, decent, affordable homes for Oregonians with low incomes. Developers of affordable housing across Oregon are ready to do this work: they have completed project plans, acquired vacant land, and are waiting for resources to build these homes. Housing that is affordable and available is desperately needed across Oregon, and affordable housing developers stand ready to build it as soon as the Legislature makes funds available.

We know how to build safe, stable, and affordable apartment homes, and we can create more of them in our community. Affordable homes created through this innovative effort will offer a better future for the families and individuals who call them home. The Legislature should invest an additional \$50 million in the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Program to help build more affordable rental homes and homeownership opportunities in communities across the State.

Maintaining existing affordable housing

In every corner of Oregon apartment homes have been built to make sure families, seniors, and people with disabilities have safe, stable, and affordable housing. Over the years, we've built thousands of affordable apartment homes in towns and cities across Oregon. Some of these affordable apartment homes were built by private owners using resources from the federal government, including rental assistance which helps households with low incomes to pay the rent every month. In many of our smaller communities, these buildings are the only affordable apartment homes available.

These apartment homes have provided stability, safety, and affordability for area residents for the last thirty-plus years. The people who live in these rental homes are seniors, people experiencing disabilities, and families just starting out.

Providing funding through lottery bonds will help to maintain these affordable apartment homes for the next generation. Lottery bond resources to preserve existing affordable housing are critical to our efforts to maintain these properties, and will provide an opportunity to assist in purchasing and reinvesting in these apartment homes to ensure they will be safe and available for the next generation.

Just like schools or hospitals, affordable rental homes are part of our community's infrastructure, and need investments to ensure the homes are around for the next generation. Investments will ensure this precious resource continues to be available for generations of Oregonians to come.

We have identified significant need to invest in existing affordable housing of over \$300 million for the next three biennia. These resources will support the maintenance of existing, publicly supported affordable housing, such as housing built with federal rental subsidies and assistance from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and US Department of Agriculture Rural Development; public housing in need of repair and renovation; manufactured home parks; and publicly supported housing built through the existing federal or state programs or other resources in need of reinvestment. We are requesting that the Legislature approve an additional \$20 million in lottery bonds for the maintenance and preservation for all publicly supported housing, as defined in ORS 456.250.

Affordable housing is an important part of our community infrastructure, and the people who call these apartments home are vital members of our community. We need to make sure we're taking care of the affordable rental homes built in communities across Oregon as they are critical to our future. We need to protect these important community assets and the people that call them home.

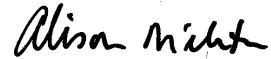
Investing in the basics – a safe, stable, affordable home for Oregonians with low incomes – has positive ripple effects across our state. We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When

people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits. 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. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

We urge your strong support of an additional \$50 million in Article XI-Q general obligation bonds to build new affordable homes through the LIFT program, and \$20 million in lottery bonds to invest in safe, stable, and affordable homes across Oregon.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
Business for a Better Portland
CASA of Oregon
Chrisman Development
Central City Concern
Children First for Oregon
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Hillsboro
City of Hood River
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
College Housing Northwest
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enhabit
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authorities of Oregon
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

Impact Northwest
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Oregon Cities
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Rogue Action Center
Rose CDC
St. Francis Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition