



HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 21, 2020

House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Smith Warner, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support for HB 4001 and its -A7 amendments, which will support the siting of shelters in communities in more parts of our state, and addresses a critical need for safe shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

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.

We know that many seniors, families, and people who experience disabilities are paying too much of their income towards rent, and may be experiencing housing instability. In Oregon, three out of four households with extremely low incomes pay over half of their income towards rent. When people pay a significant portion of their income towards rent, they have too little money left over for food, medicine, utilities, and an emergency may mean they end up experiencing homelessness.

Oregon also has one of the highest rates of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, meaning they are sleeping outside, in a tent, or a car. Sleeping outside is not safe, and providing an opportunity for safety either in shelter or an affordable home is critical. HB 4001 would help address this problem by removing barriers to identifying locations where shelters can be placed. HB 4001 would temporarily remove barriers to siting shelters and require local jurisdictions to allow shelters without regard for land use laws in their communities. The -A7 amendments add important sideboards to ensure the shelter space is adequate and protects occupants from health or safety concerns, and ensures the organization operating the shelter is qualified or is partnering with an experienced shelter provider. The -A7 amendments also

require that these shelters be placed within urban growth boundaries or within rural residential lands, as well as preventing shelters in places such as wetlands, helping to add sideboards related to location.

Communities across our state – Corvallis, Portland, Bend, LaGrande, and others – have all struggled to site shelters for a range of reasons. The bold action proposed in HB 4001 and the amendments will help support the siting of shelters temporarily, in order to address the emergency of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. In addition to these temporary changes in land use, HB 4001 would also dedicate \$45 million to shelter capacity, technical assistance from OHCS, navigation centers in specific communities, and more.

People who are experiencing homelessness are often unable to access shelter because of a lack of availability or other barriers. Sleeping on the street or in a tent outside is very dangerous, particularly for women and youth. Shelter is not a permanent solution to homelessness. We need more shelters to provide a safe place to sleep for people experiencing homelessness, while we work to address our housing needs by creating more safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Our state must respond to the housing challenges our communities are facing by making serious investments in housing opportunity and safety, particularly for people with the lowest incomes. We support the package of investments proposed by House Speaker Kotek, to investment in emergency shelter, building and maintaining more safe, stable and affordable homes. The proposed investments include:

- \$45 million to increase capacity for emergency shelters;
- \$50 million to build more affordable homes;
- \$20 million to maintain affordable homes; and \$15 million in other critical investments.

We urge your support of HB 4001 and its -A7 amendments.

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
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 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