



**December 17, 2020**

**To:** Co-Chair Senate President Peter Courtney, Co-Chair Speaker Tina Kotek, and Members of the Joint Interim Committee On The Third Special Session of 2020

**From:** Paige Spence, Washington County Government Relations Manager

**Re:** Support for LC 18

Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, and Committee Members:

Washington County deeply appreciates your ongoing leadership as we all respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Washington County continues to take all the steps we can to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus to protect our communities as well as our own staff.

As you may know, we had the first diagnosed COVID case, and our case numbers are climbing rapidly each day. We know how important it is for public health that our residents are able to self-isolate and quarantine as needed. But, county-wide, we are experiencing increases in our homeless population for both individuals and families. We know that if the eviction moratorium ends at the end of this year, that forcing more people onto the streets will increase COVID case numbers and morbidity.

Thank you for considering LC 18, which provides the necessary statutory and financial relief that Washington County has identified as critical needs for the special session to alleviate the crisis.

#### Eviction Moratorium

LC 18 would extend the eviction moratorium to provide families and individuals stability at least through the end of this school year. As a result of job losses, many tenants are still unable to pay rent, and thus small landlords are unable to pay their own mortgages and living expenses. We know that during this pandemic, ensuring that individuals and families continuously have a safe and stable place to call home prevents the disease from spreading. As we all know, many houses are also serving as classrooms and our County Charter does not currently allow us to enact a local eviction moratorium, thus we have been deeply appreciative of the state and federal moratoria that are in place through December 31, 2020.

#### Landlord Compensation Fund

The Housing Authority of Washington County is prepared to coordinate with the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department in getting these funds out to our County's landlords. We urge you to consider \$100 million in rent assistance dollars for the fund, acknowledging that the \$1 amount in the current bill draft is a placeholder for the final figure.