

March 28, 2021

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means, Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development,

I am writing to submit testimony in support of HB 5011 and funding for the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services (OHCS).

I live in the town of Mosier in Wasco County and also spend considerable time in Hood River County. The issue of affordable housing in the Gorge has become a top issue of concern for me and many of my neighbors and acquaintances, as housing in this area has become out of reach for many hard-working residents of this area.

While all the areas of OHCS work are important, my primary focus is on the need for affordable housing. This includes full funding for the Local Innovation Fast Track (LIFT) Rental and Homeownership program to develop Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). The \$250 million in Permanent Supportive Housing funds are essential because they begin to meet the complex needs of Oregonians who are unable to remain stably housed without supportive tenancy services and rental assistance.

I also support approval of \$20 million in lottery funds for land acquisition and \$10 million in lottery bonds for preservation of affordable housing that is at risk of being lost in Oregon. General Fund money for rent assistance and services (\$15 million) and for rent assistance for at-risk youth transitioning out of foster care (\$4.5 million) will save money in the long run by preventing our neighbors from falling into homelessness.

Thank you for considering this request from rural Oregon.

Sincerely,
William L. White