



BUILDING SUSTAINING LEADING

BRIDGE HOUSING
CORPORATION

BRIDGE PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT COMPANY

BRIDGE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

April 9, 2021

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

Honorable Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair;
Honorable Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair;
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction;

On behalf of BRIDGE Housing, I am writing to you today in support of SB 5505, and the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing (PSH) in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds.

BRIDGE Housing's mission is to strengthen communities and improve the lives of its residents, beginning — but not ending — with affordable housing. BRIDGE is the largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing on the West Coast and has participated in the development of over 18,000 housing units throughout Oregon, Washington, and California with a total development cost of over \$3 billion, with another \$3.8 billion under construction and in the pipeline. BRIDGE has a 37-year track record of building high-quality affordable housing together with local partners in order to create thriving, inclusive communities.

A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need. Permanent supportive housing integrates wrap-around services into community-based housing options enabling people with disabilities to successfully live independently.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, Oregon was already experiencing a housing crisis, and too many of our neighbors and community members were experiencing housing instability. In the 2019-20 school year, over 21,000 kids experienced homelessness at some point during the year, with their families. Due to COVID and the early closure of schools, we know this is likely an undercount.

Since 2015, the Legislature has committed millions in general obligation bonds to the LIFT program, and over 3,600 affordable homes have been or are being built. These homes are being built in communities all over Oregon — in the Portland Metro area, Newport to Ontario, Klamath Falls to Astoria, Roseburg, Hermiston, Eugene, Bend, Redmond, and Sisters, and everywhere in between. With additional resources, we can support more of this work and build projects across Oregon to provide safe and stable places to call home for members of our communities.

BRIDGE Housing opened its Portland office in 2013. Since then, BRIDGE has created or preserved 922 units in Oregon. Another 445 units are currently in the pre-development phase and 178 units are under construction. Completed in August 2020, BRIDGE's Songbird building accounts for 61 of the completed units. The creation of Songbird was made possible with an award of \$2,741,950 from the 2018 LIFT program, funded by Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds. Songbird has created a long-term meaningful impact by bringing displaced communities back to inner-north and northeast Portland, preventing further displacement and creating employment opportunities for historically disadvantaged workers. This year, BRIDGE is depending on LIFT funding to quickly deliver urgently needed affordable housing to residents in unincorporated Washington County. If funded, the Aloha project will provide 82 homes to specifically serve the historically disenfranchised Latinx and Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

More projects like Songbird and BRIDGE's Aloha project are needed throughout the state. The LIFT program provides a critical source of flexible funding that will help to create more homes for people who cannot afford to live in our communities.

As a result, BRIDGE Housing strongly urges your support for the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds in SB 5505.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the people of the State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kurt Creager', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kurt Creager
Executive Vice President
BRIDGE Housing