

April 9, 2021

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

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee

I write to you today on behalf of CASA of Oregon in support of SB 5505, and the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds.

CASA of Oregon's mission is to improve lives in underserved communities by building and renovating affordable housing and neighborhood facilities and providing programs and resources that increase families' financial well-being. A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need and a foundation for all of our work.

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 across Oregon – 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.

CASA helped complete one of the State's first LIFT projects, Villa Esperanza in Woodburn, a 17 unit complex focused on keeping together families with children facing unstable living conditions. This project would not have been possible without LIFT funds.

CASA partners with many potential owners of affordable housing who are working to prepare projects for development, but face increasing competition for finite funding. The proposed allocation of LIFT funds will allow projects to stop waiting and address our housing crisis now.

We urge 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 State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bullock Housing Development Manager, CASA of Oregon