



February 23, 2021

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair  
House Committee on Housing

**Mayor Lucy Vinis Testimony on behalf of the City of Eugene in Support for HB 2004 and 2006, as amended.**

Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Lucy Vinis, Mayor of Eugene and I thank you each for your service to Oregon and for allowing testimony on this critical issue. I am here in my official capacity as Mayor and speak on behalf of the City of Eugene in support of House Bill 2004 and 2006.

As you have heard today, HB2004/2006 are the follow-through from HB4001 during the 2020 Session. While this bill and the assistance it brings was delayed, the homeless crisis in our communities has continued to increase, being exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic. Communities desperately need the direct financial and policy assistance from the State to address this priority crisis. Through my involvement with the US Conference of Mayors and US Mayors and CEOs for Housing, I have come to realize that every single Mayor across this country is facing a homeless crisis without sufficient state or federal support. HB 2004 and 2006 are a start to changing this situation and we are hopeful that a new focus on addressing the needs of states and local government are forthcoming from DC.

As you well know, Eugene and Lane County have been partnering for over two years to implement the findings from our Shelter Feasibility and Homelessness System Assessment, specifically a low barrier shelter with attached Navigation Center. The \$5 million dollars of direct funding identified in HB2004, as amended, will be used to support the operation of an Emergency Shelter and Navigation Center in Eugene, with the potential that a portion of the funding will be used for capital improvements. Additionally, Eugene supports the \$26.5 million in grants for increasing low-barrier shelter capacity, providing necessary facilities/amenities and rapid rehousing services for service providers statewide.

HB2006 provides adequate timing to implement the investments outlined in HB2004 to ensure our community is able to transition from COVID-19 response into the management and operation of a low barrier shelter. As you have heard from Commissioner Buch, we are partnering with Lane County in this effort and continue to apply a 'systems approach' in addressing the complex needs of our homeless populations.

Regarding the land use authority for the siting of shelters in HB 2006, the City is supportive of this policy, and has made exceptional gains based on the temporary authority that was provided under HB4212 during this summer's special session. This fall, Eugene received and approved seven applications for temporary shelter sites from Lane County, St Vincent de Paul, and First Baptist Church. We have a robust webpage that provides overview of the process, links to the legislation, application process, and copies of the approved applications. We are proud of our community's ability to respond to the need and opportunity, especially in the midst of the continued pandemic emergency.

We also support the proposed revisions to the definition of emergency shelter, to expand from "a building" to "a building or cluster of buildings" will ensure inclusion of the shelter solutions Eugene has been a leader in developing, such as tiny home villages and pallet shelter pods. With this and some of the other proposed changes, we expect that additional local partners will come forward with new site applications.

In closing, I want to extend my deep appreciation to Speaker Kotek for continuing to support this issue, as well as you Chair Fahey, co-chairs, and the full committee for your leadership and commitment to bringing real resources and energy into this critical topic.

Thank you for your service to our State and I urge you to support HB 2004 and HB 2006.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lucy Vinis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lucy Vinis, Mayor