



HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 8, 2022

Senate Committee on Labor & Business
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for SB 1579, the Equity Investment Act.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

In Oregon, three out of four households with extremely low incomes pay over half of their income towards rent. When people pay that much of their income towards rent, they have too few resources left over for food, medicine, or utilities. An emergency of a few hundred dollars may mean they end up experiencing homelessness.

Due to systemic racism, red lining, disparities in wealth and wages, people of color are less likely to own their home than their white peers¹. In Oregon, approximately 35% of Black people own their homes, compared to 65% of White people in Oregon². The Equity Investment Act seeks to address the harm caused to people of color who, due to systemic racism have been unfairly targeted, penalized, and incarcerated through the criminal justice system, which has life-long consequences to people's ability to access safe and stable housing³. Sentencing disparities and the impacts of racism are pervasive in our justice system due to selective policing, racism and bias in policing, prosecution, and conviction, as well as access to justice.

SB 1579 proposes the creation of an Economic Equity Investment Program, which would disburse funding to culturally responsive organizations, those closest to communities most impacted to support existing programs that bolster access to wealth building strategies like

¹ <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/closing-homeownership-gap-will-require-rooting-systemic-racism-out-mortgage-underwriting>

² https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/2019-JARDHO-Addressing%20Barriers%20to%20Home%20Ownership%20for%20People%20of%20Color%20in%20Oregon.pdf

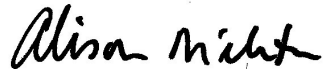
³ <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/policy-priorities/housing-and-criminal-justice>

homeownership, workforce development, and microenterprise opportunities. SB 1579 would also capitalize the fund with \$50 million.

This bill is a crucial step in the continuing work to bring resources and build the capacity of organizations working closest to BIPOC communities and working on undoing harm done to these communities and providing equitable access to opportunities in homeownership, wealth, self-sufficiency, and prosperity.

When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits. Significant and intentional efforts must be made to reduce racial disparities in access to housing. We urge your support of SB 1579. Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
Business for a Better Portland
CASA of Oregon
Cascade AIDS Project
Central City Concern
Chrisman Development
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Forest Grove
City of Hillsboro
City of Hood River
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
College Housing Northwest
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO)
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Services Consortium
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Home Forward
Homes for Good
Horizon Project, Inc.
Housing Authorities of Oregon
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Oregon Cities
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mercy Housing Northwest
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Consumer Justice
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Our Children Oregon
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community College
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Housing Center
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Portland: Neighbors Welcome
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC Oregon)
Rogue Action Center
Rose CDC
St. Francis Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association (SETA)
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
West Tuality Habitat for Humanity
Wishcamper Development Partners