



Testimony in Support of HB 4123

Before the House Committee on Rules

February 9, 2022

Submitted by Jim McCauley, Legislative Director - League of Oregon Cities

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan, and members of the Committee, on behalf Oregon's 241 cities the League of Oregon Cities is supporting HB 4123.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 4123. As you know, the LOC represents all of Oregon's 241 incorporated cities, which continue to face escalating rates of homelessness and a severe shortage of affordable housing and supportive services. In recent legislative sessions, the LOC has advocated to increase critical state investments in housing and services programs across the housing spectrum, from preventing and ending homelessness, to developing and maintaining affordable homes, to increasing access to and maintenance of affordable homeownership. The League also remains your committed partner in both crafting and implementing sound policies to address Oregon's most pressing housing needs.

That is why we are thrilled to support HB 4123, which establishes locally led, regional housing coordination through 8 pilots across the state. Each pilot will receive \$1 million in state funding over two years to operationalize coordinated offices to strengthen their communities' homeless response.

Despite recent state investments in additional shelter and homeless services, Oregon lacks a cohesive statewide system to address homelessness. These funds will provide critical, on the ground coordination between local governments and local providers to identify and close service gaps in local communities. These pilots are not intended to be duplicative of existing work in the community. Instead, these pilots will:

- Provide high-level coordination, centralized communication, and strategic visioning;
- Identify opportunities to more effectively leverage existing funds and access new resources; and
- Create a more equitable, accessible and responsive system for their residents experiencing homelessness.

HB 4123 was carefully crafted to provide a basic structure for accountability and the reasonable use of funds while giving communities the flexibility to model local best practices and create efficiencies in their regional homeless response systems, all in the name of improving access to resources and services for Oregonians experiencing homelessness. The required coordination with existing community partners, culturally specific organizations, and state and federal

systems intends to build on Oregon's developing homeless response strategy, including critical connections to permanent affordable housing.

The LOC worked closely with our partners at the Association of Oregon Counties to vet this concept with our members and the bill incorporates feedback from a range of stakeholders, including local provider partners, community action agencies, community-based organizations, and advocates as well as expertise from Oregon Housing and Community Services.

Thank you for your consideration for HB 4123 and the pilot proposals from 8 city-county partnerships from around the state. We urge your support.