



February 9, 2022

House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Morgan, Vice Chair Campos, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for several provisions within the -3 amendments to HB 4051.

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.

The -3 amendments to HB 4051 include several important changes:

- Section 1 and 2 extend the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities and require several additional reports to support the implementation of this critical work. This Task Force was created in 2021 through HB 2100¹;
- Section 3 extends the flexibility to site shelters in communities passed by HB 2006² in 2021. As you know, previous to the passage of this bill, communities across Oregon struggled to site shelters and we face an emergency of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in our communities. The critical provisions of HB 2006 are currently set to expire on June 30, 2022. Section 3 would extend these provisions through June 30, 2023 to allow another year for communities and homeless service providers to site shelters in their communities;
- Section 4 clarifies SB 8 (2021)³ to ensure the bill is implemented as intended.

Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities

Today, racial disparities exist throughout our systems and structures. Because of systemic and institutional racism, our BIPOC community members experience higher rates of homelessness, housing instability, and rent burden than their White peers, and lower rates of access to homeownership. People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately people of color,

¹ <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2100>

² <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2006>

³ <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/SB8>

compared to their representation in the general population. The national Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC) report⁴ on homelessness and disparities notes:

“Although Black people comprise 13% of the general population in the United States and 26% of those living in poverty, they account for more than 40% of the homeless population suggesting that poverty rates alone do not explain the over-representation.”

In Oregon, the 2019 Point in Time count⁵ showed that while Black Oregonians make up 1.9% of the general population, they make up 6% of people experiencing homelessness who were counted in 2019.

We have a responsibility to change the system that has led to these disparate outcomes and in making sure our systems, structures, and outcomes, are equitable. We seek a system that moves beyond one that does not exacerbate or perpetuate racial disparities, to one that is built to consistently and actively reduce them. We want to work collaboratively to transform our system into one that can help us achieve the community we want - where everyone has a place to call home, and homelessness is rare and brief if it occurs.

In addition to several critical statutory changes, HB 2100 created the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities. The Task Force was appointed in the fall, and in the late fall, held many meetings to discuss and report back to the Legislature in January.

The Task Force membership included a range of members, including Legislators, OHCS, the Governor’s Racial Justice Council, Community Action Agencies, culturally specific homeless service providers, and urban and rural homeless service providers. The Task Force also included a range of perspectives from across the homeless service continuum, and organizations who serve different types of populations experiencing homelessness as well as members with lived experience with homelessness.

The HB 2100 Task Force has developed a set of recommendations to make important changes to Oregon’s homeless services funding system and structure to support racial equity. The report and the Task Force have worked to incorporate equitable decision making and robust data collection. The Task Force’s report also includes critical information on the disproportionate impact of homelessness on communities of color. The recommendations of the Task Force include clarifying racial equity expectations of providers, creating systemic accountability to reduce disparities, ensuring the inclusion of historically excluded communities in funding structures, and lowering barriers to state and federal funding.

The Task Force’s final recommendations incorporate and operationalize racial equity principles into systems change within housing and homelessness services. The final recommendations⁶ include an extension of the Task Force through 2025, and the -3 amendments to HB 4051 envision at least two additional reports from the Task Force.

These two additional reports will focus on implementation, and in particular specific details on how OHCS should implement the recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force has will work to provide detailed guidance about how to implement the next phases of this work, particularly related to goals 3 and 4, which recommend changes to the funding structure and

⁴ <https://c4innovates.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SPARC-Phase-1-Findings-March-2018.pdf>

⁵ <https://public.tableau.com/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services#!/vizhome/2019Point-in-TimeDashboard/Story1>

⁶ https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/Findings%20and%20Recommendations_HB2100%20Task%20Force_Final.pdf

modify contracting processes. The reports are expected to occur in September, 2022 and March, 2023. The work of the Task Force is likely to be iterative, which accounts for the long timeline for the continuation of the work.

We support the Task Force recommendations to continue into the next phase of this important work and deliver on the promise of HB 2100 to decrease racial housing disparities in Oregon.

Shelter Siting Provisions

Oregon also has one of the highest rates of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, meaning they are sleeping outside, in a tent, or a car. In 2019, Oregon Housing and Community Services commissioned a study of shelter⁷ in our state, and found that Oregon is one of four states where more than half of people experiencing homelessness don't have access to shelter. In Oregon, 61% of people experiencing homelessness are unsheltered. This high rate is directly due to the lack of availability of shelter in our community. In addition, some people seeking shelter are unable to access it due to barriers in shelter – they cannot stay with their partner or their pet because of shelter capacity or policy.

Sleeping outside is not safe, and providing an opportunity for safety either in shelter or an affordable home is critical. HB 2006 helped to address this problem by removing barriers to identifying locations where shelters can be placed. HB 2006 required local jurisdictions to allow shelters without regard for land use laws in their communities until June 30, 2022.

While the Housing Alliance has not taken an official position on the extension of the shelter siting provisions included in the -3 amendments, we supported the original bill, HB 2006. We also have heard from communities across Oregon that have used the flexibility provided in HB 2006 to site shelters in their communities, and we know this work is critical to providing safety to people experiencing homelessness while we work to build permanent solutions – more affordable homes.

SB 8 (2021)

Affordable housing developers face barriers such as a lack of land that is available, affordable, and zoned appropriately. In addition, local rules may artificially limit the number of homes an affordable housing provider can build. Even when sites are zoned appropriately, there may unfortunately be concerns expressed or challenges filed by local neighbors that have little to do with the proposals themselves. These neighbors may be motivated by concerns over living near affordable housing and misconceptions about who lives in affordable housing or who simply want density to be limited, use zoning and design arguments to increase the difficulty of siting much needed affordable housing.

Senate Bill 8, passed in 2021, considered the important work done by the Legislature over the last five years to remove barriers to affordable housing development, the circumstances that continue to limit affordable housing development, and took meaningful but measured steps forward.

Senate Bill 8 allowed affordable housing to be developed on land that is zoned for commercial, land owned by public entities, and land owned by non-profit religious institutions. SB 8 allowed affordable housing in these zones. Under SB 8, a local jurisdiction would not be allowed to conduct a rezone process for the development, but would be allowed to impose requirements

⁷ <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/ISD/RA/Oregon-Statewide-Shelter-Study.pdf>

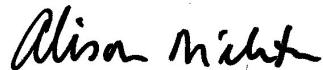
upon design and building permits.

Unfortunately, the bill was unclear in one place, and Section 4 of the -3 amendments to HB 4051 seeks to provide important clarity. The bill would clarify that if the proposed affordable housing is on property that is either: owned by a public body or a nonprofit corporation organized as a religious institution; or the property is zoned for commercial use, to allow religious assembly, or as public lands, the affordable housing project would qualify for the flexibility under this law.

This change is critical to clarify the original intent of SB 8, and allow its full impact.

We urge your support of the -3 amendments to HB 4051. 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