



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

March 2, 2023

Senator Aaron Woods
Representative David Gomberg
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means, Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 5511

Dear Co-Chairs Woods, Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in strong support of SB 5511. This bill, providing over \$1.46 billion in resources, will significantly increase Oregon Housing and Community Services' (OHCS) ability to:

- Reduce unsheltered homelessness in the near term;
- Rehouse people experiencing homelessness in the longer term;
- Build and preserve more housing units statewide; and
- Increase homeownership.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County. At NWPP, we understand the importance of investing in solutions to homelessness that prioritize permanent housing placements and person-centered services as well as long-term funding for expanded affordable housing projects.

As direct service providers, we frequently see the critical and transformative impacts of homelessness response and prevention dollars in our community, and yet we know that these programs must grow in order to meet the level of need and effectively stabilize housing for more low-income Oregonians. We support Governor Kotek's recommended investment of \$415.45 million to grow these programs and further expedite urgent coordination between state agencies and local communities to launch emergency responses immediately. SB 5511 expands on the Governor's Early Session investment proposal to rehouse and maintain housing stability for households moving from unsheltered homelessness into stable housing.

Our extensive role in service provision in Multnomah County has also given us a strong vantage point to understand the urgent need for expanded production of deeply affordable housing units, both in the Portland Metro Area as well as statewide. The historic investments proposed by Governor Kotek will make significant progress towards the statewide annual production target to produce 36,000 housing units per year. A sustained, multi-year commitment is necessary to produce the housing supply we need in the next ten years.

As a community-based organization, we are also committed to addressing persistent racial disparities in housing access for communities of color, which includes rental housing opportunities as well as homeownership. We support the work of the Joint Task Force Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership, which has provided important recommendations that address systemic barriers to generational wealth for Communities of Color and advance efforts to promote racial equity in communities across Oregon.

We urge the Committee to support SB 5511 to fund OHCS, which we believe strikes the necessary balance between the needs of Oregonians experiencing homelessness and affordable housing supply expansion, in order to meet the current challenge of addressing housing instability and homelessness in Oregon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Golino de Lovato
Executive Director
Northwest Pilot Project