

Submitter: Bianetth Valdez

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Transportation and Economic Development

Measure: SB5511

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

I urge your support for Senate Bill 5511. This bill, providing over \$1.46 billion, will go a long way towards funding OHCS in order to:

Reduce unsheltered homelessness this year;

Rehouse people experiencing homelessness in the longer term;

Build and preserve more housing units statewide; and

Increase homeownership.

These historic investments will make significant progress towards Governor Kotek's annual production target to produce 36,000 housing units per year. It took years for Oregon to get into our current housing and homelessness crisis. We're going to need a sustained multi-year commitment to produce the housing supply we need in the next ten years. This budget proposal is an important step in the right direction.

As someone who is a renter and works in affordable housing, I know firsthand that this budget will ensure ongoing funding for AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING, HOMEOWNERSHIP, and/or HOMELESSNESS SERVICES from mission driven, community-based nonprofits like ones I have worked with in our community and help reach the above goals.

The Governor's recommended budget invests \$1.0325 billion in proven supply solutions including OHCS' Local Innovation Fast Track (LIFT) Rental Program, Permanent Supportive Housing and preservation programs. This proposal also builds on more recent innovations we are excited about including expanding the co-location of early learning and affordable housing developments and establishing a PSH Risk Mitigation Fund to stabilize operating costs and support the longevity of PSH developments. These all align with the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis which makes it clear the state must invest in the production of new homes and preservation of existing stock.

In addition, investments in homeownership are a critical tool to overcome persistent racial disparities in access to homeownership for households of color and have an opportunity to build generational wealth. The work of the Joint Task Force Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership provides important recommendations that align with these budget recommendations to expand the creation of generational wealth for Communities of Color across Oregon.

The \$415.45 million in the budget for homelessness response and prevention aligns with the Early Session package proposed by Governor Kotek. This early package serves as a “down payment” to expedite coordination between state agencies and local communities to launch emergency responses sooner. The Governor’s recommended budget expands on those early investments to rehouse and maintain housing stability for households moving from unsheltered homelessness into stable housing; provides ongoing homelessness prevention support; maintains shelter operations; and creates new permanent supportive housing.

I urge you to support SB 5511 to fund OHCS, which balances the needs of Oregonians experiencing homelessness with addressing chronic housing supply shortfalls.

Sincerely,
Bianett