

Submitter: Amy Robison

On Behalf  
Of:

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

Measure: SB5511

My name is Amy Robison, and I am a freelance writer living in Portland. I am also a part of the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition - an interfaith collective of more than 50 faith communities across Oregon devoted to using our land to build diverse affordable housing. One hundred percent of our congregations additionally serve unhoused and unstably housed people as core parts of our outreach services, from food pantries to rental support to advocacy. My home church First United Methodist of Portland houses a shelter for college students.

In one of the richest countries in the world, it is shameful that so many of our neighbors have to live unhoused because of wealth inequality and housing prices that continue to skyrocket. The desperation of houselessness makes everyone in our community less safe, regardless of housing status. Faith communities are often the safety net under the safety net. There is simply not enough we can do to save our communities and neighbors - many of them employed full-time - from houselessness, hunger, and mental health crises for which there are simply not enough resources.

This is clearly an enormous systemic gap that needs an immediate systemic bridge. The Governor's budget is one such bridge, and we are strongly in support of this important and immediate solution to our crisis and encourage you to do so as well.