



Oregon Business Council Support for Governor Kotek's Emergency Order and Homelessness Funding Request

The Oregon Business Council leadership strongly supports Governor Kotek's initial steps to address the state's homelessness crisis. Urgent action is a moral imperative; a compassionate response to the dire conditions of Oregonians living on the streets state wide is long overdue.

The funding request is, at best, a stopgap measure. This humanitarian crisis has its roots in an undersupplied, overpriced market for housing. And until that is addressed, too many Oregonians will cycle in and out of homelessness. But those living on the streets today cannot wait for us to get our housing market in order. They need, and deserve, an immediate response. The Governor's mix of prevention, housing placement, and emergency shelter is balanced and backed by good evidence.

Monetary resources are important, but so is the Governor's commitment to coordinate and accelerate regional responses to the crisis. Service funding and delivery is notoriously complex. If asked, it is unlikely any region could accurately report how much local agencies currently spend to address homelessness. This emergency state appropriation should be coupled with a requirement that regions systematically track their cross-agency resources and report how they are being deployed by counties, housing authorities, cities, and nonprofit agencies.

The Governor should also seek to improve regional goal setting. Localities often elevate service delivery as goals (e.g., numbers of housing placements or support services delivered). Service delivery is only a means to an end. Making progress on this crisis will require regional goals and timeframes for reductions in literal homelessness.

The Governor's focus gives us hope that we may see an easing of this crisis in 2023, and we offer our support as she launches the challenging work.