



March 10, 2023

Chair Rep. Maxine Dexter
Vice-Chair Rep. Mark Gamba
Vice-Chair Rep. Jeffrey Helfrich
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: OEDD Support for HB 3174; Incorporating \$5 Million for Community Capacity Funding

Dear Chair Dexter, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Helfrich, and members of the Committee,

I am very happy to have the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 3174, on behalf of Oregon Economic Development Districts.

As you may be aware, Oregon's Economic Development Districts help the communities and regions we serve by mobilizing resources, technical assistance, strategic planning and project coordination services to make local communities and Oregon's economy thrive. Together, Oregon's 12 unique economic development districts cover the state's 36 counties, 297 municipalities, countless unincorporated communities, and work with the 9 federally-recognized Tribes — all of us working to provide effective, efficient delivery of economic development services within our regions.

OEDD is in strong support of HB 3147, particularly the provisions that ensure Oregon makes critical investments in community capacity. As practitioners working directly with local government partners, and across multiple industries, we have witnessed first-hand the significant capacity constraints that exist in our rural and underserved communities. Unfortunately, this lack of capacity results in some of the biggest challenges facing communities, including access to affordable housing and community and economic development, going unresolved.

By injecting \$5 million dollars into community capacity, Oregon's policy makers will help ensure that Oregon is leveraging an already existing statewide network of Councils of Government (COGs), Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and Tribes to identify and support needed infrastructure and housing development projects across Oregon. Utilizing Economic Development Districts and COGs to add local capacity provides the opportunity for streamlined and efficient collaboration of the partners who are needed to solve many of the vexing challenges facing individual communities, including: affordable and quality housing, infrastructure upgrades, intermodal transportation systems, workforce initiatives, childcare, small business development, and so much more.

We know that improving access to affordable housing for Oregonians and solving our state's housing crisis will require deliberate and extensive local community collaboration and innovation, which is exactly the type of work that EDDs and COGs do day in and day out in the communities we serve, in

every corner of Oregon. Improving local community capacity is a vital first step needed to help address so many of the challenges facing our state, with housing solutions often atop the list of priorities for communities.

On behalf of Oregon's 12 economic development districts, and our statewide association, I urge the Legislature's strong support of HB 3174 with the addition of \$5 million in community capacity investments.

Sincerely,



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