

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Hartman, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

I am writing in support of HB 3440. I live outside Sunriver in southern Deschutes County, and serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for youth in foster care and as a Deschutes County Library Board member. I see firsthand the challenge for many residents throughout Deschutes County to obtain affordable and safe housing .

As a CASA I see youth exiting foster care at the age of 18 or 21 facing huge obstacles finding housing due to their limited financial and family support. They are often homeless or rely heavily on friends for shelter. Another challenge I see as a CASA are parents being reunited with their children needing to find and maintain safe and stable housing for the family. Unfortunately obtaining housing in Deschutes County is frequently an obstacle that is beyond these youth and families. This housing insecurity often stands in the way of their ability to successfully move forward toward independent living or caring for their children. HB 3440 would make funds available for housing placement/rehousing services, rental assistance, and development of new low income housing for youth and families with children in Deschutes County.

Our libraries daily serve as a shelter and resource for those experiencing homelessness. Our library system does a remarkable job connecting all patrons to the information and resources requested. However serving as shelter for the homeless brings challenges and difficulties for the library and staff. The funds from HB 3440 would serve as a meaningful tool to help Deschutes County establish a cooperative funding source for the prevention and reduction of homelessness. This effort would benefit the communities of Deschutes County and help address the challenges facing the library in addressing the needs of the homeless.

I cannot speak for the Library District Board on which I serve but I strongly support the option to use tax foreclosed property receipts as provided for by HB 3440.

Please support the passage of HB 3440 giving the communities of Deschutes County the flexibility to use the tax receipts in a creative and cooperative way to address housing insecurity for youth, families with children and those experiencing homelessness. Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss the benefits of HB 3440 in more detail.

Respectfully,
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