



March 31, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capitol Construction

RE: Support Bond Investment in Affordable Housing (HB 5005)

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, Members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Radcliffe and I am writing on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Portland Region to urge your strong support for House Bill 5005, and specifically, the allocation of **\$154 million in the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) for Homeownership Program**.

Yesterday, OHCS released a summary of current pending applications for the LIFT Homeownership Program; the LIFT and LIFT Supplemental Grants together are between 124% - 247% oversubscribed. This means that shovel-ready affordable homeownership developments will not move forward this year. Given our state's housing crisis, we can't afford to continue to leave these projects unbuilt.

Throughout our service area, spanning Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties, we are faced with skyrocketing housing costs, which are integrally tied to wealth and health disparities. Majority white homeowners have reaped a windfall in equity growth over the past few decades, while BIPOC households and younger families have scrambled to keep up with rising rents and have been almost entirely closed out of homeownership. Black Portlanders own homes at half the rate of white Portlanders, and this gap is worsening. BIPOC homeownership has suffered from redlining and urban renewal, and more recently, predatory lending, displacement and gentrification, and the inequitable economic fallout of the pandemic. Compounding those factors, rising interest rates and inflation means that [half as many Black Americans](#) can afford home ownership today as could in 2021.

In partnership with local communities, Habitat Portland Region is working to change the trajectory for hundreds of families through homeownership. We are using the funds currently available in Oregon, and we are prepared to do more. Over 80% of our region's Habitat homeowners are households of color. From Gresham to Lake Oswego, and Hillsboro to Cully, we are building high-quality, energy-efficient homes that are proven to set families on a path to better health outcomes, improved high school graduation rates, and intergenerational wealth building.

70% of Habitat Portland Region homebuyers earn between 35-60% Area Median Income (on average – about \$41,000 per year for a household of 4). For families at this income level,

homeownership means a 30-year affordable mortgage, never having to move and change schools to chase affordable rent, security in the event of a health or financial hardship, and an asset to pass down to the next generation.

As homeownership providers, the Habitat for Humanity network urges your targeted investment in critical programs that expand opportunities for Oregonians to plant roots in their communities and begin building intergenerational wealth. Organizations like Habitat for Humanity are well-positioned to help meet Oregon's supply shortfalls. Your support for the critical investments included in HB 5005 will help ensure we succeed together.

Thank you for your consideration and service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Radcliffe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Radcliffe
Director of Government Relations
Habitat for Humanity Portland Region