

Submitter: Beth Barker-Hidalgo

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1530

Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Dear Committee Members;

As a direct service provider on the south coast, I can attest that historically our county has not been first to the table when it comes to intentionally focusing on the development of supportive housing of any type, with the exception of a few adult foster care beds.

For the first time in history Curry County has received direct funding from OHCS. Typically OHCS funding is funneled through community action agencies who then are expected to contract with smaller nonprofits to get much-needed funding and services into the homes where families struggle to maintain housing, food and utility security.

With the development of our local planning group, Curry County Homeless Task Force, we are now positioned to bring funding directly into the county, through direct service providers. Already Curry County is experiencing greater coordination, collaboration and self sufficiency as a result of this funding.

Historically our county has been under represented and under funded when it comes to services designed to improve social determinants of health for our most vulnerable households. We have zero shelter beds year round. The 2024 Curry County Point in Time count resulted in a near double in the number of unsheltered households from 2023. This is partially due to greater coordination and volunteerism. But we also know our environment/weather can influence people to come to our area.

People are coming to our community because we do not typically experience deep freeze, snow, or icy conditions. We also don't experience extreme heat. This can lead to in-migration to the south coast as households respond to extreme weather conditions. People can typically survive in a tent, vehicle, or RV due to our temperate weather conditions. We are NOT prepared for in-migration. We're aren't prepared for our local unsheltered households.

Without intentional investments in supportive, sober, transitional living options and increased subsidized units Curry County will continue to struggle to provide basic infrastructure , sanitation, shelter or housing. To increase these services we need an increased investment from OHCS and HUD.

On any given day in OR there are seniors, women, children veterans, and men staying in places not meant for human habitation. Say that out loud. Say it again. Incentivizing development of supportive and or subsidized housing in every community is a great start. Fund intentional homeless services and accessible, affordable housing projects now.

With gratitude,