



February 14, 2024

Senator Kayse Jama
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St NE, S-409
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 1530

Dear Chair Jama and Members of the Committee:

Proud Ground calls on the Legislature to make significant investments in housing and homelessness prevention through SB 1530.

We support the essential investments included in the -3 amendment. This funding will keep Oregonians housed, keep homeless shelters open, facilitate housing production, and support household stability for renters and homeowners.

However, three investments prioritized by the Oregon Housing Alliance and its member organizations still need funding in 2024. We call for an additional amendment to SB 1530 for these critical items:

\$30 million to preserve existing affordable housing

According to a recent report from OHCS, \$200 million is required each biennium to maintain the state's existing infrastructure of affordable housing. In 2023, the Legislature allocated only \$50M. While far short of the need, a \$30 million investment in 2024 will enable housing providers to preserve some 400 homes, such as manufactured housing parks at risk of closure and regulated properties with expiring affordability restrictions.

\$15 million to build affordable homes for first-time homebuyers

This funding directly supports the production of new, affordable homes in urban and rural areas. This investment was a top priority of the Joint Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Home Ownership (JARDHO). In 2023, 87% of affordable homeownership projects awarded by OHCS depended on this kind of flexible funding. Meeting Governor Kotek's housing production goal while reducing racial disparities requires ongoing investment in affordable homeownership.

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A total of \$10 million to fully fund the Individual Development Account (IDA) program

Since 1999, the IDA matched-savings program has empowered over 17,000 Oregonians to save for self-defined financial goals – including homeownership, home repair, post-secondary education, small businesses, vehicles and emergency savings. More than 2,600 people are currently saving through an IDA, including 419 constituents represented by members of this committee. However, due to a lack of funding the program is at risk of shrinking to serve fewer people than at any point in the past 12 years. A \$10 million investment is needed to maintain the program's current service level by enrolling approximately 2,200 savers during this biennium.

Thank you for your dedication to seeking solutions to Oregon's affordable housing and homelessness crises. In addition to the investments already included in SB 1530, the three programs highlighted here represent important steps toward providing stable, affordable housing for all Oregonians. We call on the Legislature to fund these investments.

Sincerely,

Dominique L. Merriweather
Executive Director
Proud Ground

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