

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Housing and Development
re: SB Bill 1530 -3 Amendment**

February 13, 2024

**Jacqui Treiger, Campaign Manager: Climate and Transportation
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Re: Oregon Environmental Council support for SB 1530 -3 Amendment (Funding for Healthy Homes)

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chairs Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

We are pleased to see \$7.5 million of funding for the Healthy Homes Grant Program included in the -3 amendment to SB 1530. We agree that solving Oregon's housing crisis is a priority and that includes keeping our most vulnerable community members in their homes. Affordable utility bills and access to much needed home repairs contributes to housing security for all Oregonians. The Healthy Homes program fills crucial gaps in state and federal energy efficiency and weatherization programs and is expected to run out of funding before the next budget cycle. **To keep the program open and running, we respectfully urge \$15 million is invested in the Healthy Homes program.**

As climate-fueled weather events continue to increase across the state—from extreme heat to events like the ice storm we saw earlier this year—our housing stock will need more repairs. An estimated 49 percent of homes and apartments in Oregon were built before 1980. These buildings are energy inefficient and in need of repairs. Environmental justice communities, including people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, and people in rural areas, are more likely to live in older, energy efficient housing, and therefore stand to benefit most from home repairs.

The Healthy Homes Grant Program provides funding for crucial repairs including mold abatement and lead removal, which no other program covers. Energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades will not make a home that has mold safer, and the home may not be able to receive these services until the mold has been addressed. The various incentive programs can be braided together to help fully pay for these essential home repairs and improvements. Ensuring that the Healthy Homes Grant Program is fully funded through the next budget cycle, will be very important, especially as our communities rebuild from the damage done by the ice storm earlier this year.

We face both a housing and a climate crisis. Healthy Homes addresses both by lowering utility costs, increasing the health and resiliency of a home, and reducing climate pollution, which allows our vulnerable neighbors and frontline communities to stay in their homes. We respectfully request you make this additional funding of \$15 million for the Healthy Homes Grant Program a top priority in this year's budget.

Sincerely,

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