

Submitter: Andy Nelson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1530

2-14-2024

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

RE: SB 1530: Appropriates moneys to the Housing and Community Services Department, Oregon Health Authority, Department of Human Services, State Department of Energy and Oregon Department of Administrative Services for various programs.

Impact NW urges the Legislature to make significant investments in housing and homelessness prevention through SB 1530.

Impact NW is the largest, most comprehensive organization in the region dedicated to preventing homelessness. We have been in the community for nearly 60 years working on our community's most pressing needs. We work with 30,000 people a year in the Portland-Vancouver area with stabilizing and strengthening services to keep people housed. Our staff are on the frontlines of the housing and homelessness crisis, and pandemic recovery to help people access services such as housing, rental and energy assistance, other basic needs, and upstream supports so they can thrive. Impact NW supports this bill as it will address Oregon's housing and homelessness crisis.

Housing Oregon, Governor Kotek and the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) are advocating for a vital investment of \$65 million in Oregon's homeless shelters and transitional housing system. This funding is essential to stabilize our existing shelter capacity and enhance the outcomes of our shelter system. It includes crucial support for services like housing navigation and assistance with obtaining identification, which are key steps in transitioning individuals from shelters to permanent housing.

Ensuring that shelters remain open and operational is not just a matter of addressing homelessness; it is also an issue of racial and geographic equity. Disproportionate rates of homelessness among Black, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaskan Native Oregonians highlight the racial disparities that need to be addressed. Moreover, nearly 40% of shelters at risk of closure are located in the Balance of State CoC, underscoring the statewide impact of this issue.

The request for \$65 million is a necessary step towards a more equitable and just

Oregon. It is an investment in the basic human dignity of providing shelter to those in need. I urge you to consider this request with the seriousness and urgency it deserves, recognizing that it is not just a financial decision but a moral imperative.

Thank you for your dedication to serving the people of Oregon.

Andy Nelson
Executive Director, Impact NW