



February 14, 2024

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem OR 97301

Chair, Vice-Chair, Members of the Committee,

My name is Katya Mendez and I work for Mountain West Investment Corporation headquartered here in Salem, Oregon. I am the Assistant Project Director for the Salem-Keizer Community Business and Education Leader's Collaborative (CBEL).

I am writing in support of HB 5201 as it pertains to the Capital Funding Request for the project "Pacific Station Apartments for Families" which is an effort headed up by Catholic Community Services. This project fulfills an incredibly important need affordable housing in our community for our most vulnerable population affected by so much adversity—affordable housing.

We know through the feedback we receive from our CBEL Neighborhood Family Council members, having affordable housing is at the top of the list of things they need most. By design, this project not only fills the need of affordable housing but is designed to promote the Strengthening Family Protective Factors which are resilience, relationships, knowledge, communication, and support, by providing wrap around supports. Organizations like Church at the Park, Center 50+ and Salem for Refugees have come alongside as wonderful community supporters and partners in this effort so there is already lots of support behind this.

The access to affordable supportive housing can be life-changing especially for our children and families—especially larger families, who face an even harder challenge of finding affordable housing to comfortably accommodate their whole family. Studies show that children who experience adverse childhood experiences can have life-long consequences for their mental and physical health. This project can diminish some of these experiences for our kids and help our community thrive. Please consider supporting their endeavor, it can change the trajectory of our local families.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge you to support this request.

Sincerely,
Katya Mendez