



Rural Oregon Continuum Of Care

February 24, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Chair Rep. Pam Marsh
900 Court St. NE, H-474
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for House Bill 3644

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice-Chair Andersen, and Members
of the Committee,

My name is Brooke Matthews, and I am the Program Manager for the Balance of State Continuum of Care which represents housing, domestic violence and youth services in 26 counties in Oregon. I am submitting testimony today in strong support for House Bill 3644.

As a representative of rural Oregon, I understand how imperative it is to have a unified approach with centralized funding and standards in place to ensure that services are available from La Grande to Klamath Falls, to Brookings to Astoria. House Bill 3644 provides the foundation that can provide access to lifesaving services for all Oregonians, including those in rural Oregon who, until recently, had been historically underrepresented in distribution of services.

I was a participant in the Emergency Shelter work group which constructed guidelines for the initial component in the housing continuum: emergency shelter. Emergency shelter is a vital step on the pathway to obtaining housing stability, as it is often our first, life saving contact with those experiencing unsheltered houselessness. There is a significant need for a unified, consistent approach to emergency shelter, with shared language and a shared definition of human dignity, and this legislation addresses that need.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge your support for this vital legislation.

Sincerely,
Brooke L. Matthews
Program Manager, Balance of State Continuum of Care