



NORTH BEND CITY/COOS-CURRY HOUSING AUTHORITIES

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Testimony in Support of HB 3644

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Vorderstrasse, and I have had the great honor of representing the Housing Authorities of Oregon in the Sustainable Shelter Funding Workgroup. I am writing today in strong support of HB 3644 on behalf of the North Bend City/Coos-Curry Housing Authorities.

This bill represents a critical step forward in building a sustainable and effective shelter system in Oregon. It does not yet go as far as we ultimately need, but it lays the foundation for a more integrated and accountable system. HB 3644 is a significant move toward uniting our housing continuum, and for that reason, we support its passage.

What HB 3644 Accomplishes

The Sustainable Shelter Funding Workgroup was convened to assess the current state shelter system, analyze funding models, and develop a framework that ensures sustainability, equity, and accountability. Over the past five years, Oregon has made unprecedented investments in shelter expansion, stabilizing thousands of vulnerable Oregonians. HB 3644 builds upon these efforts by shifting our focus from emergency responses to long-term solutions that prioritize housing outcomes.

Key Accomplishments of the Workgroup and HB 3644

- 1. Transitioning to an Outcomes-Based Shelter Model**
 - Historically, shelters have been measured by outputs—bed counts, case management hours, and client intakes. HB 3644 prioritizes outcomes, ensuring that individuals served by the system are meaningfully supported toward stable housing.
- 2. Establishing a Regional Coordination Model**
 - The bill directs new shelter appropriations through a unified regional coordination model administered by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). This ensures equitable distribution of funds, reduces administrative burdens, and allows for local flexibility while maintaining accountability.
- 3. Defining Clear Shelter Standards and Pathways to Housing**
 - HB 3644 establishes consistent habitability and operational standards for all state-funded shelters, ensuring they provide safe, dignified, and effective services.

- It mandates the development of housing-focused shelter strategies, requiring regions to outline specific plans for how individuals will transition into permanent housing.
4. **Aligning Shelter Investments with Broader Housing System Needs**
- The workgroup identified the need to bridge shelter and housing services by integrating funding streams and case management efforts.
 - By refining eligibility criteria and funding guidelines, HB 3644 promotes a more efficient allocation of resources across the continuum of care.
5. **Streamlining Data Collection and Technical Assistance**
- The bill enhances data collection and reporting to ensure better tracking of shelter performance and housing outcomes.
 - OHCS will establish a dedicated funding pool for training and technical assistance, reducing administrative burdens on providers and ensuring shelters operate in alignment with best practices.

Why This Matters

The North Bend City/Coos-Curry Housing Authorities have witnessed firsthand the impact of Oregon's evolving shelter system. We know that emergency shelters alone cannot solve homelessness. A sustainable system must be outcomes-driven, regionally coordinated, and directly connected to housing opportunities.

While HB 3644 does not yet mandate housing-linked requirements for all state-funded shelter beds- *ensuring that every public dollar invested in shelter beds also creates an intentional pathway into affordable housing*- it sets the stage for this necessary evolution to occur as we build out our statewide housing continuum. This bill acknowledges that shelter is not the solution but a step in the broader goal of ending homelessness. It creates the accountability and structure needed to ensure that shelter investments are aligned with long-term housing stability.

Final Thoughts

HB 3644 is a major step forward in creating a sustainable and effective shelter system in Oregon. It reflects the workgroup's extensive deliberations and the collective expertise of stakeholders across the housing continuum. While we must continue to push for stronger connections between shelter and affordable housing, this bill moves us in the right direction.

For these reasons, I urge your support for HB 3644.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Matthew Vorderstrasse, MA
Executive Director