

Dear Chair of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness and committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the critical need for preservation funding for existing affordable housing communities. As executive director of Community Partners for Affordable Housing, a community-based housing development organization, I know how challenging it is to add new affordable housing to our state's inventory and how tragic it is to lose affordable homes that we could preserve.

Preserving affordable housing is crucial for several reasons. Generally, it costs much less money to preserve an apartment community than to replace it. And along with cost, there is a great deal of time involved in development; it is common for a new building to require five years to complete as developers apply for funding sources, apply for permits, and complete construction. Finally, the experience of needing to move because the rent is no longer subsidized can be traumatic; seniors have built communities, kids are attending schools, and disruption has wide ranging impacts.

We are grateful that CPAH has benefitted from preservation funds. In particular, we have two family properties that had significant life and safety issues, as well as deteriorating infrastructure, which have received preservation resources. In 2022, CPAH received funding for Oleson Woods, a 32-unit community that houses large families. We focused on repairing the external stairwells, which were becoming unusable, as well as other systems. This year we just received funds to address needs at Metzger Place, where the sewer lines, constructed in the seventies, were no longer able to adequately serve the building.

The cost for both buildings was just over six million dollars. In both cases, neither CPAH nor the property had the resources to address these extraordinary property needs. Without state preservation support, CPAH would be unable to move forward with property rehabilitation, we would lose the housing, and we would need to permanently relocate residents.

Obviously, when we build a community, we do it so it will last as long as possible. As a mission-based nonprofit, we know that we are going to be holding onto it for the long haul. Preservation resources extend the life and usability of this important housing stock, which means we can serve our residents for longer and serve them better.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



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