



March 20, 2025

Re: Support for HB 2964-3

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Portland Region. We appreciate the outpouring of interest from faith communities seeking to contribute land to meet our state's housing needs. Additionally, predevelopment funds are scarce across the housing continuum but are often wholly inaccessible to developers of affordable homeownership, co-ops, and community land trusts. By marrying faith-based lands and alternative housing types and tenures, HB 2964-3 has the potential to catalyze community-led housing developments, some of which have been in the "idea" phase for many years.

We'd also like to share a powerful example of what's possible with an initial investment to unlock faith-based land. Habitat Portland Region has had a long-standing relationship with the Greater Portland Bible Church, a community that has supported our work through contributions, volunteering, and offering their space for meetings. The Church, located in the amenity-rich Hillsdale neighborhood of SW Portland, also had roughly 5 surplus acres, most of which was dedicated to an overflow parking lot. In 2021, the opportunity to transform that land presented itself through the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Habitat Portland Region received \$1 M in ARPA funding from the Oregon legislature, which we leveraged to secure an additional \$300,000 from Meyer Memorial Trust, and we purchased 4.97 acres from the Church at close to half of the land's appraised value.

Today, we are constructing 52 affordable homes on this land, as well as preserving 40% of the site as a conservation zone, with a wooded path that will benefit the entire neighborhood. Five homes are single-story fully accessible homes and 45 of the homes have 3, 4, and 5 bedrooms. At least 150 kids will have stable, healthy, and affordable homes less than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from excellent public schools. [Gooseberry Trails](#) will be permanently affordable in partnership with Proud Ground Community Land Trust. Construction is funded through LIFT, Portland's Metro Housing Bond dollars, and the Portland Clean Energy Fund.

In the scheme of a large project like this, \$1M to kickstart development is a critical but relatively modest investment. ARPA won't come again, so we encourage the legislature to invest to ensure the availability of flexible predevelopment funding that can support these sorts of partnerships between affordable homeownership developers and faith communities.

Thank you for your service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah El".

Sarah Radcliffe
Director of Government Relations
Habitat for Humanity Portland Region