



*Housing Oregon
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Housing*

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*Ernesto Fonseca -
Hacienda CDC*

*Maria Elena Guerra -
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Development Corp*

*Garrick Harmel –
Casa of Oregon*

*Nkenge Harmon
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League of Portland*

*Kymberly Horner -
Portland Community
Reinvestment Inc.*

*Foster Martinez – St.
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County*

*Richard Morrow –
Columbia Cascade
Housing Corp.*

*Kristy Rodriguez –
Housing Authority of
Malheur & Harney
Counties*

January 26, 2021

Representative Julie Fahey
Chair, House Committee on Housing
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey and members of the committee:

Housing Oregon urges the House Committee on Housing to support allocation of \$24 million for the Agricultural Workforce Housing Tax Credit as proposed in HB 2096. Since 1989, this tax credit has been the most effective tool for the construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition of agriculture workforce housing in Oregon.

This proposal is an important building block towards reaching Oregon Housing and Community Services' goal of increasing State funded housing in rural Oregon by 75% as outlined in their 2019 five-year Statewide Housing Plan.

The Governor's Racial Justice Council, in their recommendation for the 2021-23 Governor's budget, also incorporates agricultural workforce housing as a component of their support for increased affordable housing development.

Safe and healthy housing for Oregon's estimated 160,000+ agricultural workers is a critical component for maintaining a stable workforce, especially as evidenced this past year due to the COVID crisis. These workers are the foundation of Oregon's agricultural economy estimated at a value of \$5.6 billion in 2019 according to the USDA's Economic Research Service (Jan. 5, 2021.)

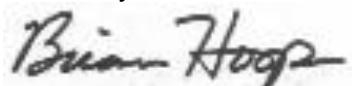
Mission-driven, community-based, nonprofit members of Housing Oregon have been instrumental in helping house thousands of agricultural workers across Oregon in both new and renovated housing projects. And yet, according to Oregon Housing and Community Services, less than 5% of the housing needs of agricultural workers and their families have been met.

While Housing Oregon supports the increase in funding, we are concerned about the proposed monetization of the tax credit for growers. We believe there is a need for more robust discussion around this topic between OHCS and concerned stakeholders. From an equity standpoint, this change is only for farmers and not community-led organizations. Our member organizations have a history of pairing this funding with other sources needed to complete projects ensuring sufficient accountability that public dollars are being used as intended.

Housing Oregon is a membership-based statewide association of affordable housing Community Development Corporations (CDCs) committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner. We are working towards a day when every Oregonian has a safe and healthy place to call home.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions at 503-475-6056 or brian@housingoregon.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Hoop". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Brian" on top and "Hoop" below it, slightly overlapping.

Brian Hoop
Executive Director
Housing Oregon