



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 9, 2022

House Committee on Housing  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Morgan, Vice Chair Campos, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for several provisions within the -3 amendments to HB 4051.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

The -3 amendments to HB 4051 include several important changes:

- Section 1 and 2 extend the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities and require several additional reports to support the implementation of this critical work. This Task Force was created in 2021 through HB 2100<sup>1</sup>;
- Section 3 extends the flexibility to site shelters in communities passed by HB 2006<sup>2</sup> in 2021. As you know, previous to the passage of this bill, communities across Oregon struggled to site shelters and we face an emergency of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in our communities. The critical provisions of HB 2006 are currently set to expire on June 30, 2022. Section 3 would extend these provisions through June 30, 2023 to allow another year for communities and homeless service providers to site shelters in their communities;
- Section 4 clarifies SB 8 (2021)<sup>3</sup> to ensure the bill is implemented as intended.

## **Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities**

Today, racial disparities exist throughout our systems and structures. Because of systemic and institutional racism, our BIPOC community members experience higher rates of homelessness, housing instability, and rent burden than their White peers, and lower rates of access to homeownership. People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately people of color,

<sup>1</sup> <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2100>

<sup>2</sup> <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2006>

<sup>3</sup> <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/SB8>

compared to their representation in the general population. The national Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC) report<sup>4</sup> on homelessness and disparities notes:

*“Although Black people comprise 13% of the general population in the United States and 26% of those living in poverty, they account for more than 40% of the homeless population suggesting that poverty rates alone do not explain the over-representation.”*

In Oregon, the 2019 Point in Time count<sup>5</sup> showed that while Black Oregonians make up 1.9% of the general population, they make up 6% of people experiencing homelessness who were counted in 2019.

We have a responsibility to change the system that has led to these disparate outcomes and in making sure our systems, structures, and outcomes, are equitable. We seek a system that moves beyond one that does not exacerbate or perpetuate racial disparities, to one that is built to consistently and actively reduce them. We want to work collaboratively to transform our system into one that can help us achieve the community we want - where everyone has a place to call home, and homelessness is rare and brief if it occurs.

In addition to several critical statutory changes, HB 2100 created the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities. The Task Force was appointed in the fall, and in the late fall, held many meetings to discuss and report back to the Legislature in January.

The Task Force membership included a range of members, including Legislators, OHCS, the Governor’s Racial Justice Council, Community Action Agencies, culturally specific homeless service providers, and urban and rural homeless service providers. The Task Force also included a range of perspectives from across the homeless service continuum, and organizations who serve different types of populations experiencing homelessness as well as members with lived experience with homelessness.

The HB 2100 Task Force has developed a set of recommendations to make important changes to Oregon’s homeless services funding system and structure to support racial equity. The report and the Task Force have worked to incorporate equitable decision making and robust data collection. The Task Force’s report also includes critical information on the disproportionate impact of homelessness on communities of color. The recommendations of the Task Force include clarifying racial equity expectations of providers, creating systemic accountability to reduce disparities, ensuring the inclusion of historically excluded communities in funding structures, and lowering barriers to state and federal funding.

The Task Force’s final recommendations incorporate and operationalize racial equity principles into systems change within housing and homelessness services. The final recommendations<sup>6</sup> include an extension of the Task Force through 2025, and the -3 amendments to HB 4051 envision at least two additional reports from the Task Force.

These two additional reports will focus on implementation, and in particular specific details on how OHCS should implement the recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force has will work to provide detailed guidance about how to implement the next phases of this work, particularly related to goals 3 and 4, which recommend changes to the funding structure and

<sup>4</sup> <https://c4innovates.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SPARC-Phase-1-Findings-March-2018.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://public.tableau.com/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services#!/vizhome/2019Point-in-TimeDashboard/Story1>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen\\_engagement/Reports/Findings%20and%20Recommendations\\_HB2100%20Task%20Force\\_Final.pdf](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/Findings%20and%20Recommendations_HB2100%20Task%20Force_Final.pdf)

modify contracting processes. The reports are expected to occur in September, 2022 and March, 2023. The work of the Task Force is likely to be iterative, which accounts for the long timeline for the continuation of the work.

We support the Task Force recommendations to continue into the next phase of this important work and deliver on the promise of HB 2100 to decrease racial housing disparities in Oregon.

### **Shelter Siting Provisions**

Oregon also has one of the highest rates of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, meaning they are sleeping outside, in a tent, or a car. In 2019, Oregon Housing and Community Services commissioned a study of shelter<sup>7</sup> in our state, and found that Oregon is one of four states where more than half of people experiencing homelessness don't have access to shelter. In Oregon, 61% of people experiencing homelessness are unsheltered. This high rate is directly due to the lack of availability of shelter in our community. In addition, some people seeking shelter are unable to access it due to barriers in shelter – they cannot stay with their partner or their pet because of shelter capacity or policy.

Sleeping outside is not safe, and providing an opportunity for safety either in shelter or an affordable home is critical. HB 2006 helped to address this problem by removing barriers to identifying locations where shelters can be placed. HB 2006 required local jurisdictions to allow shelters without regard for land use laws in their communities until June 30, 2022.

While the Housing Alliance has not taken an official position on the extension of the shelter siting provisions included in the -3 amendments, we supported the original bill, HB 2006. We also have heard from communities across Oregon that have used the flexibility provided in HB 2006 to site shelters in their communities, and we know this work is critical to providing safety to people experiencing homelessness while we work to build permanent solutions – more affordable homes.

### **SB 8 (2021)**

Affordable housing developers face barriers such as a lack of land that is available, affordable, and zoned appropriately. In addition, local rules may artificially limit the number of homes an affordable housing provider can build. Even when sites are zoned appropriately, there may unfortunately be concerns expressed or challenges filed by local neighbors that have little to do with the proposals themselves. These neighbors may be motivated by concerns over living near affordable housing and misconceptions about who lives in affordable housing or who simply want density to be limited, use zoning and design arguments to increase the difficulty of siting much needed affordable housing.

Senate Bill 8, passed in 2021, considered the important work done by the Legislature over the last five years to remove barriers to affordable housing development, the circumstances that continue to limit affordable housing development, and took meaningful but measured steps forward.

Senate Bill 8 allowed affordable housing to be developed on land that is zoned for commercial, land owned by public entities, and land owned by non-profit religious institutions. SB 8 allowed affordable housing in these zones. Under SB 8, a local jurisdiction would not be allowed to conduct a rezone process for the development, but would be allowed to impose requirements

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/ISD/RA/Oregon-Statewide-Shelter-Study.pdf>

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upon design and building permits.

Unfortunately, the bill was unclear in one place, and Section 4 of the -3 amendments to HB 4051 seeks to provide important clarity. The bill would clarify that if the proposed affordable housing is on property that is either: owned by a public body or a nonprofit corporation organized as a religious institution; or the property is zoned for commercial use, to allow religious assembly, or as public lands, the affordable housing project would qualify for the flexibility under this law.

This change is critical to clarify the original intent of SB 8, and allow it's full impact.

We urge your support of the -3 amendments to HB 4051. Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

## Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
Business for a Better Portland  
CASA of Oregon  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Central City Concern  
Chrisman Development  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Eugene  
City of Forest Grove  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Hood River  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Clackamas County  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
College Housing Northwest  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Action Team  
Community Action Program of East Central Oregon  
(CAPECO)  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Development Partners  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Services Consortium  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
DevNW  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon  
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East  
Hacienda CDC  
Home Forward  
Homes for Good  
Horizon Project, Inc.  
Housing Authorities of Oregon  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Housing Development Center  
Housing Oregon  
Human Solutions  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Innovative Housing, Inc.  
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty  
JOIN  
Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Oregon Cities  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Looking Glass Community Services  
Mainstream Housing Inc.  
Metro  
Mercy Housing Northwest  
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority  
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency  
NAYA Family Center  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Northwest Pilot Project  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Consumer Justice  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Our Children Oregon  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community College  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Portland Housing Center  
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  
Portland: Neighbors Welcome  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC Oregon)  
Rogue Action Center  
Rose CDC  
St. Francis Shelter  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
Springfield Eugene Tenant Association (SETA)  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Think Real Estate  
Transition Projects  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition  
West Tuality Habitat for Humanity  
Wishcamper Development Partners