



HOUSING ALLIANCE

March 29, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Gomberg, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for 5011, the agency budget bill for Oregon Housing and Community Services.

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 of our 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.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that already, too many seniors, families, and people who experience disabilities were paying too much of their income towards rent, and were experiencing other forms of housing instability. One in four renters in Oregon pay more than 50% of their income towards rent, leaving very little left over for basics like food, medicine, and transportation costs.

Today, we want to highlight several areas of the OHCS budget that are critical to our communities and residents.

Housing Stabilization

Across Oregon, people are experiencing housing instability. The COVID pandemic has brought significant resources to the state for rent assistance and rapid re-housing. After these resources are expended, there will be continued and ongoing need for additional funds, and the Legislature should commit \$50 million to the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Homelessness Assistance Program (SHAP) to distribute emergency rent assistance, rapid re-housing resources, and emergency shelter support.

Oregon also has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness, including youth in the K-12 system, youth exiting the foster care system, and unaccompanied youth. The Housing Alliance

supports the inclusion of \$4.5 million in HB 5011 to provide long term rent assistance for youth experiencing homelessness.

With respect to the Oregon IDA Initiative, included in HB 5011, the Housing Alliance supports HB 2551 which renews the tax credit to fund the Initiative. We also support a general fund allocation of \$7 million, as described in the testimony from the IDA Initiative, which is both needed and the best way to ensure robust funding to meet current demand across the Initiative. We would encourage the committee to support the staffing request for OHCS to increase their staff capacity which works collaboratively with the IDA Initiative. Having dedicated, ongoing General Fund resources for OHCS staffing would mean more dollars would be available to serve additional IDA savers across Oregon.

Building and maintaining affordable housing

Across Oregon, we simply do not have enough affordable and available homes for every household who needs one. For many decades, though, organizations across Oregon, affordable housing developers and public housing authorities have been building safe, stable, and affordable homes. These rental homes receive public funds, and in exchange, follow strict rules about the incomes of people who qualify for the housing, how much rent can be charged, and how long the property must remain affordable. We have many local, state, and federal tools to help pay for the development of these apartment homes, although the need for these homes is far greater than the currently available resources. We urge the Legislature to do more to build and maintain more affordable homes in the 2021-23 biennium.

Agricultural workers and their families are in need of safe and affordable homes to live in, either temporarily during harvest or permanently. Many agricultural workers live in substandard or overcrowded housing, while working hard to put food on the table for Oregon families. The Agricultural Workforce Housing Tax Credit is used to develop housing for agricultural workers both on farms and in the community, and the Housing Alliance supports the proposed expansion of the program to \$24 million through HB 2096.

Additional resources to develop regulated affordable housing are needed, including rental and homeownership opportunities. Since 2015, developers have successfully utilized general obligation bonds to build affordable housing through the Local Innovation and Fast Track, or LIFT Housing program. In 2021, the Legislature should commit \$250 million in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds to this successful program for both rental and homeownership units. Developers stand ready to build more affordable rental homes for people with low incomes across Oregon.

Permanent supportive housing is one of the key solutions to ending homelessness for people who experience health conditions, mental health issues, or addictions disorders. The Legislature should commit \$50 million in General Obligation Bonds and resources for rent assistance and services to help develop new supportive housing across Oregon.

Lastly, across Oregon, we need to maintain our supply of existing affordable housing, and reinvestment is needed to maintain safe, stable, and affordable homes. These funds are needed to help to maintain all regulated, multifamily affordable housing, as well as public housing and

manufactured home parks. The Legislature should commit \$100 million in Lottery Bonds to meet needs to maintain existing affordable housing across Oregon.

Investing in Affordable Homeownership

Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership: The Governor's Budget includes \$2 million to provide expand funding for staff to provide technical assistance and outreach to communities of color to fund strategies such as language access technical assistance, collaboration with culturally specific organizations, and outreach strategies targeted to communities of color. The Housing Alliance supports this request, and urges its consideration.

Manufactured Home Park Preservation and Manufactured Home Replacement: Across Oregon, manufactured home parks are at risk of sale or closure. HB 5011 includes \$3.5 million to increase efforts to preserve manufactured home parks. In addition, thousands of Oregonians live in manufactured homes that were built before stricter laws were implemented by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for health, safety, design, and materials, or people may have lost their manufactured homes due to wildfire. HB 5011 expands on a program funded in 2019 to support homeowners to replace their homes by proposing an additional \$2.5 million for this work. We urge your support of both of these proposals.

Staffing Request

In addition, part of what I wanted to highlight for you today was the need for continued and expanded capacity within OHCS. Partners across the state, including members of the Housing Alliance, rely on OHCS to do their work, to hold funding competitions for affordable housing developments, to distribute emergency rent assistance and shelter funding, to support foreclosure counseling, and more. All of this requires staff capacity, both within OHCS and within partner agencies. For the past year, as our communities have struggled to respond to COVID, and then wildfires, both OHCS and agencies have responded – going above and beyond – while facing a lack of staff capacity and overwhelming their current staff. We urge you to fund the OHCS request for additional staff, to help ensure that the work happens in a timely and efficient manner.

We urge you to support HB 5011, and invest in housing opportunity for the 2021-23 biennium.

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
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 Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
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
Housing Authorities of Oregon
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions

Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
Impact Northwest
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
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
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 Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Our Children Oregon
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
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.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition

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