

DevNW

DEVELOPING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

February 12, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 3235

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice Chair Andersen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Saxe and I work at DevNW, an affordable housing development and asset-building agency serving Lane, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Marion, Polk and Clackamas Counties. We embark on comprehensive community development throughout our seven-county service area through services aimed at increasing financial stability for individuals and families as well as through economic and housing development.

We are one of a network of Regional Housing Centers across the state that provide financial, rental and pre-purchase education and counseling to support low- and moderate-income families in becoming first-time homebuyers. Our clients are resilient, they are working at least one, if not more jobs, to put food on the table and pay their bills. As is the case throughout much of Oregon, they are rent burdened by skyrocketing housing costs but continue to prioritize saving for a downpayment.

Despite their hard work to become mortgage ready, the availability of affordable homes for low and moderate-income first-time homebuyers is limited across the state. Affordable homeownership development helps to correct the market. There are developers like DevNW and others building new homes for ownership across the state with LIFT funds utilizing a shared equity model, most notably a Community Land Trust.

Shared equity housing ensures that homes which are affordable today remain affordable for subsequent generations. This is accomplished by placing restrictions on future appreciation and sale prices for that home, as well as income limitations for future buyers. Each buyer builds equity through paid-down principle and modest appreciation, but they give up some of the equity that they might have gained through price appreciation on the open market. In turn, the community and future homebuyers gain a home that will be affordable for generations.

The Amplify Oregon accelerated mortgage program is a critical piece in successful homeownership for these families as it is built to match the CLT model. It understands the nuances of state financing in CLT development, including both initial and long-term controls. Its eligibility meets the diverse set of homebuyers who have put in the work to become mortgage-

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ready, including requiring completion of homebuyer education and counseling by a HUD-certified counselor and being compatible with various downpayment assistance programs.

The pilot program received funding during the 2023 Legislative session. Currently, funding is available to support approximately 50 new CLT homebuyers. However, need for this product vastly outpaces current availability. In just the last 2 years, LIFT funding is spurring the development of over 540 new affordable homes across the state. The Amplify Oregon program could be a safe, affordable mortgage product for buyers of every one of these homes.

Three agencies, including NOAH, Portland Housing Center and Community LendingWorks, our affiliate nonprofit CDFI, have worked collaboratively to raise the private capital match and set up the infrastructure-including underwriting guidelines and loan documents, and we're excited to begin accepting applications this spring. NOAH manages the overall fund and capital raising. Portland Housing Center and Community LendingWorks will each provide origination services for homebuyers across the state and Community LendingWorks will retain long-term servicing of each loan. This product is not sold on the secondary market, it is held in Oregon and ongoing homeowner support is provided by Oregon-based agencies.

Homeownership is the single greatest way Americans build wealth, creating generational impact for families, stabilizing kids in school and ensuring a reliable workforce. The Amplify Oregon accelerated mortgage program leverages private capital investment, is compatible with state homeownership development funding and increases equity attainment for homeowners.

Thank you for your work to help Oregonians achieve their dream of homeownership. We encourage your support of HB 3235.

Sincerely,



Karen Saxe
Director of Policy, Advocacy and Strategic Relationships
DevNW

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