

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to providing Oregonians with housing solutions. As an organizer, non-profit employee, resident of Clackamas, and person of faith, I am dedicated to deeply listening to the needs of my neighbor and the impact of housing is a thread that I have seen run through the stories of so many of my nieghbors who find themselves in crisis. I am writing to you today to advocate for the full funding and passage of HB 3482 to provide resources for non-profits, faith communities, tribal communities, housing authorities, and local governments in the process of developing affordable housing on their property.

Oregon is currently facing a housing crisis, driven by the fact that there are not enough housing units for Oregonians — especially those who are low income. Oregon is currently short 110,000 homes to meet current demand and will need to produce almost 500,000 more to keep up with the rising population over the next two decades. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a worker making minimum wage in Oregon would need to work 82 hours per week to afford a 2-bedroom rental home at fair market rent. Over 230,000 of renter households in Oregon earn less than 50% of the average median income. Non-profits, faith communities, tribal communities, housing authorities, and local governments stand at the ready to assist the state with this crisis through building affordable housing on their developable land, but there are obstacles to completing these projects, such as starting costs and lack of knowledge on housing development, that are difficult to overcome alone. HB 3482 would help to circumvent these barriers through providing funding and resources to community entities to ensure Oregon has attainable housing available and our friends and neighbors can obtain stable housing.

HB 3482 provides resources in two crucial areas for these groups — pre-development support and technical assistance. First, this bill will provide financial support for

pre-development costs involved in developing affordable housing. This funding can cover a range of things from land surveys to community engagement efforts to build neighbor congregation approval. On their own, these costs can often total over \$100,000 and prevent projects from getting off the ground. Giving organizations access to pre-development dollars will help to ensure that projects are able to get started without costs being a barrier. Second, HB 3482 will provide a resource to assist with project management. This would be done through the appointment of a non-profit organization with expertise in affordable housing development as well as the frameworks of community groups to guide communities through the development process. This organization will play a crucial role in informing the public about the availability of the grant program as well as serve as a resource in helping communities during project development.

In my circle alone, I am aware of three faith communities that this bill would be a game-changer for. They have land that they are eager to use to address the housing crisis in their own backyard (literally, for some of these communities), but while there is land and willingness, often those first steps of pre-development and development are what keep them from being able to move forward. Funds earmarked for that purpose for many of these communities would provide the vision and direction that they would need to utilize their land in this way.

Oregon is in the midst of a crisis that non-profits, faith communities, tribal communities, housing authorities, and local governments would like to help solve, but it cannot be done alone. We know that in making these investments through this bill, we can and will assist Oregon through providing more housing opportunities for those in most need around us. I hope you will join me in ensuring Oregonians have more access to affordable housing and give HB 3482 an “aye” vote.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Stori Long,
Director of Storytelling and Engagement at Storyline Community,
Director of Outreach and Media at Oak Grove United Methodist Church