



House Housing and Homelessness Committee

HB 3589--Support

March 5, 2025

To: House Housing and Homelessness Committee

From: Bill Van Vliet, Executive Director, Network for Oregon Affordable Housing (NOAH)

NOAH, the Network for Oregon Affordable Housing, is pleased to offer its support for HB 3589.

Formed in 1990 under the leadership of the OBA, NOAH is a nonprofit lender that provides financing for affordable housing projects throughout the state. NOAH currently administers about \$420 million across a range of financing programs including acquisition, predevelopment, and permanent loans, mostly for affordable rental housing developments.

NOAH has financed many affordable housing developments dedicated to older adults and persons with disabilities. During the last decade, however, we have seen fewer new developments for aging Oregonians at a time when the population in this age group is surging. With fixed incomes and increasing rents, older Oregonians face a higher risk of homelessness, and in fact are one of the fastest growing segments of the unhoused.

For 15 years, NOAH convened the Oregon Housing Preservation Project, a public/private/philanthropic partnership focused on preserving Oregon's affordable housing stock. The majority of those projects served older adults and persons with disabilities. Most residents had fixed incomes limited to social security or disability totaling \$12,000-\$14,000/year. We came to know through that program how those projects created community for the residents that enriched and extended their lives. We also learned the fear tenants had at the prospect of losing their homes and community because there was nowhere else they could afford to live.

HB 3589 seeks to establish a program at OHCS to spur the development of housing for older adults and persons with disabilities. Combining some existing and underutilized

resources with traditional OHCS funding sources will provide the incentives necessary to encourage new developments. A permanent program at OHCS will encourage developers to routinely plan for new developments that will increase supply of affordable homes for this growing age group.

HB 3589 accomplishes two other important goals: First, it provides one-time funding for modest home improvements to allow older adults and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes. It's far less costly to keep someone in their home than help them find new housing. Second, it provides much needed technical assistance resources to increase the expertise needed to support improved housing options for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Oregon needs more affordable housing resources for vulnerable older adults and persons with disabilities. NOAH urges your support of HB 3589.

Thank you.