

DevNW

DEVELOPING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

February 19, 2025

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

RE: Support for HB 3507

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 support HB 3507.

DevNW provides financial and pre-purchase education and counseling to support low and moderate income families in becoming first-time homebuyers. Our pre-purchase services demystify the homebuying process, helping clients connect with local realtors and lenders, plan for those unexpected homeownership expenses and avoid predatory lending practices. One-on-one counseling sessions ensure that our clients are ready to take the step to homeownership, that their financial and credit picture make them mortgage-ready and that they've assembled a team of professionals they can trust.

Despite their hard work to become mortgage ready the availability of affordable homes continues to be harder to find as prices climb across the state. We are seeing median sales prices of \$430,000 in Salem, in Eugene it's close to \$500,000 and buyers in Oregon City face prices at almost \$600,000. This is not a market that provides entry for any low or moderate income family despite their hard work to become financially stable and mortgage ready.

Our team works with clients every day facing the ongoing challenge of saving for a downpayment as prices throughout their lives increase. We see that our typical client needs around \$35-40,000 in downpayment assistance in order to achieve an affordable mortgage.

HB 3507 makes much needed adjustments to support the changing needs of first-time homebuyers, allowing agencies like ours to increase our depth and breadth of buyers served.

For over a decade, downpayment assistance has primarily been funded from document recording fee receipts. However, given the sustained high interest rate market, we've seen a marked decline in those receipts due to depressed real estate transactions. We have heard from Oregon Housing and Community Services that they will not be releasing any funding for DPA from this source over the next biennium. We greatly appreciate the Governor's commitment to supporting

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families across Oregon to achieve homeownership with the inclusion of \$30 million in DPA in her budget to maintain current service levels.

Homeownership is the single greatest way that Americans build wealth. It helps to break the cycle of generational poverty and reduce the racial wealth gap. Kids succeed in school when they know their family has a safe, affordable place to call home, families are more engaged in their neighborhood and community and employers can rely on a more stable workforce. Downpayment assistance makes the dream of homeownership a reality for our clients.

Thank you for your work to support first-time homebuyers throughout Oregon and we urge your support of HB 3507.

Sincerely,



Karen Saxe

Director of Policy, Advocacy and Strategic Relationships
DevNW

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