



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

555 Liberty St SE / Room 220 • Salem, OR 97301-3513 • 503-588-6255 • Fax 503-588-6354

March 23, 2021

Chair Janelle Bynum  
Vice-Chair Rob Noble  
Vice-Chair Karin Power  
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, Room 331  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Power and Member of the Committee:

The City of Salem supports the intent of House Bill 3115 and is actively working with many in our community to reduce hardships that lead to homelessness of our residents and families with children and to increase access to affordable housing for those at-risk of becoming homeless.

The Salem City Council recognizes homelessness as a critical problem in our community. We're taking a collaborative approach and adapting multiple best practices to fit our community. As a result, we've taken action to develop [more shelter and affordable housing](#), including investing \$2.1 million in our [Homeless Rental Assistance Program](#) which links chronically homeless individuals to housing, food furnishings and social services. So far, this program has housed more than 300 individuals with an 83 percent success rate in keeping folks in stable housing. We also provide affordable housing through our Salem Housing Authority and provide tax incentives to developers who build affordable housing in our area. The City extends more than \$400,000 each year in grants to local non-profits for emergency assistance and essential services.

To support these community-based efforts and in recognition of the sheltering crisis in our community, our legislative agenda includes additional affordable housing, a navigation center, a sobering center, and a mobile crisis response unit.

HB 3115 provides a framework for cities and counties to develop and update local ordinances with policies on public space management. The intent of the bill is to make more shelter available in local communities by 2023 and create a path forward for local governments to regulate sitting, lying, sleeping or keeping warm and dry outdoors on public property.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Women, minorities, and disabled are encouraged to apply•ADA Accommodations will be provided upon request

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

March 23, 2021

Page 2

We appreciate the work of stakeholders to draft this bill and look forward to transitioning to a conversation about how the state can partner with cities and counties in preventing homelessness.

However, in its current draft, the language in HB 3115 is overly broad and unclear. Without amendments, the bill will require extensive litigation to clarify the scope. To avoid costly litigation which may restrict services to those most in need, amendments to HB 3115 would help to clarify the scope of the bill relating to the definition of public property, the type of laws the bill would affect, clarification of the reasonableness standard, and who has standing to bring a lawsuit against a local government under the law.

We look forward to moving toward a workable solution for all.

Sincerely,



Steven D. Powers  
City Manager