



We build strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter.

March 10, 2025

To: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

**RE: Support for HB 3746**

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

My name is Shannon Vilhauer and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. On behalf of our organization and the 23 local Habitat for Humanity affiliates building and repairing homes across Oregon, we urge your strong support for HB 3746. Please enact these critically needed condo liability reforms.

During fiscal year 2024, Oregon Habitat for Humanity affiliates collectively built and sold 146 new homes. Local Habitat for Humanity affiliates are among our state's most steady producers of condominiums—whether the resulting homes look like multifamily developments, townhomes or single, detached dwellings. Oregon's extensive and burdensome condominium defect liability statutes have hampered our ability to hire professionals, like architects. Time and time again, high-performing professionals cite Oregon's rigid condo defect liability statutes as making it too risky for them to engage in this type of work.

Our state's condo defect liability statutes of limitations and repose are longer than many of our western state peers. Due to this extensive period of liability, developers, financiers and insurers take on much higher risk to build condominiums here. This heightened risk has greatly suppressed condo production in Oregon. The proportion of owner-occupied multifamily units permitted in this state is less than half the national average.

As of April 2024, Oregon is the fifth least affordable state for housing relative to median household income. Condos are more affordable entry points to homeownership. The median sale price of a condominium in Oregon was \$341,000 in 2023, 38 percent lower than the \$552,460 price of a single-family home. As the state implements policy changes to increase housing production, it needs to ensure that every housing type remains viable to produce. If Oregon does not address condo defect liability reform, a key component of entry-level homeownership opportunities will remain underrepresented in our state's housing mix.

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon actively supports the Unlocking Homeownership Coalition, a group of 40+ nonprofit and for-profit organizations working together to expand first-time homeownership access for thousands of Oregonians. Homeownership is the key to building household stability, generational wealth and strong communities, yet it remains out of reach for far too many Oregon

households. We are pushing for smart, people-focused investments and policies in 2025 that will make a meaningful difference in addressing our state's housing crisis. HB 3746 addresses Oregon's need for condo liability reform by enacting the following four key adjustments:

- Lower Risk – Reduce Oregon's statutes of limitations and repose to 6 years, to more closely align with CDL in other western states.
- Reduce Litigation – Establish a means for a developer to remedy a defect by an agreement with the claimant without going through litigation.
- Enact Informed Consent – Ensure that at least half of condo unit owners must vote in writing to proceed with litigation.
- Ensure Consumer Protection – Require special inspections for common defects and still allow claimant litigation to proceed if an agreement to remedy the defect cannot be reached with the developer.

HB 3746 strikes an appropriate balance between condo owners' consumer protections and developers' ability to expand production of this key entry-level homeownership type. We urge your strong support.

Thank you for your leadership and service,



Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director