



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

Feb. 7, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

**RE: Support of SB 1537**

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson 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 24 local Habitat for Humanity affiliates we serve, I am writing to express our strong support for SB 1537.

In Oregon, one in six households spend more than half of their income on housing. The demand for affordable, safe and healthy homes far exceeds the available supply, causing too many of our friends and neighbors to face extremely difficult choices between housing and other basic needs, like food, healthcare and childcare. Oregon is currently behind by 140,000 housing units. We urge you to act now to help us make up for decades of under-building.

By implementing the following key interventions, SB 1537 aims to address the housing shortage that is driving up the cost of living for Oregonians and worsening the state's homelessness crisis:

- Establish 11 housing production tools.
- Create the housing production and accountability office.
- Implement four land use changes.

We need more housing of all types, across all affordability levels. In rural, suburban and urban communities, Oregonians are straining under the pressure of an increasingly unaffordable housing market. Research shows that rates of homelessness are directly linked to the cost of housing in a given area. Our state's housing shortage has resulted in skyrocketing rents and home prices. We have to build more housing to solve the homelessness crisis and improve the quality of living for working families.

Low and moderate income housing providers need support purchasing land, and mitigating site issues. The land acquisition and site mitigation funds provide critical resources to increase our production across Oregon.

Cities, counties, tribes, and special districts have critical transportation, water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure and facility needs in order to unlock new housing development. \$200 million to establish a new housing infrastructure program is a critical component.

The moderate income housing revolving loan fund will provide a critical source of funds for local communities to close gaps in housing financing needs. This is a sustainable source of funds that will provide a continued impact on housing production.

The scale of the housing supply shortage in Oregon demands bold action. SB 1537 interweaves key housing development resources with innovative land use changes. Thank you again for your careful consideration of this important and innovative legislative package, designed to catalyze the increased production of our state's supply of healthy homes — affordable to a variety of income ranges.

Thank you for your dedicated service,



Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director