

DevNW

DEVELOPING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

February 14, 2023

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

RE: Support for HB 2001

Chair Dexter, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Helfrich and Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Saxe and I work for DevNW, an affordable housing development and counseling agency serving Lane, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Marion and Clackamas Counties.

We support the suite of provisions within HB 2001 to respond to our housing crisis, including providing innovative approaches to addressing housing supply barriers; a focus on youth homelessness prevention; and critical measures to help prevent eviction-caused homelessness.

DevNW provides financial, rental and pre-purchase education and counseling, paired with financial resources, throughout our six counties. Despite our work, our clients face skyrocketing housing costs in all communities due to a lack of housing supply. Our communities need increased affordable housing options throughout the housing continuum.

As an affordable housing developer (both rental and for ownership), we support the sections of the bill aimed at increasing housing types and access to pre-development funding. For many in our community, manufactured housing has been the most accessible path to affordable homeownership. Through investments in the expansion of modular housing, we know we can quickly site new units of affordable housing and increase the pathway into affordable homeownership throughout our communities.

As we collectively work towards dramatically scaling up the supply of housing, pre-development funding is a critical need in supporting new and emerging affordable housing developers. The details with this funding are key. In initial stages of development, prior to applications and securing funding, pre-development in the form of grants is most beneficial. This supports organizations in securing sites and moving into the planning phases (getting appraisals, surveys, etc.) without the added risk of a loan for a project that may not be funded. Upon securing financing, the next phase of pre-

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development can often support a loan to bridge the gap until the funding subsidy is realized. As we work to broaden the bench of affordable housing developers throughout the state, this type of dual approach will be extremely beneficial as it decreases the reliance on developers to bring large scale funding to the project at conception. We are excited about the opportunity to expand affordable housing providers and projects as we work together on this proposal.

DevNW provides site-based housing, scattered-site housing through rental assistance and supportive services for transitioned-aged youth and young parents in Lane and Clackamas Counties. Demand for our services continually outpaces the availability of resources even as we have drastically increased our programming over the last three years. We know that preventing youth from experiencing homelessness can stem chronic adult homelessness. We wholeheartedly support the provisions in HB 2001 aimed at supporting youth experiencing homelessness through an expansion of the Emergency Housing Account.

We appreciate that HB 2001 is bipartisan and bicameral and applaud the work done to increase the supply of affordable housing and prevent both youth and eviction-caused homelessness.

We know that every Oregonian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. We thank you for all of your work on behalf of our communities and urge your support of HB 2001.

Sincerely,



Karen Saxe

Director of Policy, Advocacy and Strategic Relationships
DevNW

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