



May 7, 2021



Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

We are asking for your support of HB 5534 and the Housing Alliance request for **\$100 million in lottery bonds to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing across Oregon**. While the bill indicates these funds would be loaned to the purchasers, lottery-backed bond proceeds have in the past been granted to the purchasers. **We ask that Subsection 2 of Section 12 be amended and the word “loan” be changed to “grant”.**

CASA of Oregon helps local direct-service organizations improve the lives of Oregonians, particularly in the rural areas of the state. We are organizers, advocates and development consultants focused on building hope, homes, and financial health. We have been doing this work for over 30 years. Our mission statement is:

Deeply rooted in service to farmworkers, CASA of Oregon improves lives in underserved communities by building and renovating affordable housing and neighborhood facilities and providing programs and resources that increase families' financial well-being.

As we are all aware, housing costs throughout Oregon have skyrocketed. More and more families are paying a disproportionate amount of their income toward rent. The only way that is going to change is to preserve the existing naturally occurring affordable housing stock including manufactured housing communities.

To date, CASA has converted 18 manufactured housing communities to resident ownership and is in the process of converting communities in Newport and Springfield. These communities house very-low and low income families who own their homes individually and the land beneath their home cooperatively. Each cooperative has a board of directors who are elected by the membership. They prepare annual budgets, form committees to oversee the property, hire a property manager to collect rents and make capital improvements to the park. CASA provides ongoing technical assistance to the cooperative. Utilizing the cooperative form of ownership, we have preserved the affordability of the housing and empowered the residents to accomplish more than they ever anticipated.

Manufactured housing is the largest supply of naturally occurring affordable housing in Oregon. Because of limited subsidies available, we are only able to convert 2-3

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communities per year. Were the legislature to provide \$100 million, we could easily convert additional parks each year.

Today, we have the opportunity to invest in maintaining safe, stable, and affordable homes across Oregon, and ensure they will be available for the next generation. Oregon needs to steward these communities for future generations without risking park closures or rapidly rising rents.

CASA asks for your support for \$100 million to acquire and preserve naturally occurring affordable housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this request. We appreciate all the work you are doing to make Oregon a great place to live.

All the best,



Peter Hainley
Executive Director