



PAT FARR

Lane County Commissioner
North Eugene District
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DATE: March 25, 2019

TO: Joint Ways and Means Committee, Sub-committee on Transportation and Economic Development

RE: HB 5512, relating to the financial administration of the Housing and Community Services Department

Dear Senator Manning and Representative Gomberg and members of the Sub-committee:

The Board of Commissioners of Lane County has a keen interest in developing additional affordable housing and appreciates the responsiveness of the Oregon Legislature to the growing problem of homelessness within Oregon. In preparing testimony for the Housing and Community Services Department's budget, we first want to emphasize how collaborative the agency is. Director Salazar and her staff have established regular lines of communication to housing advocates and the agency has been very clear about their priorities and expected outcomes from investments which have been proposed for the 2019-21 biennium.

Prior to Governor Brown developing her Recommended Budget, the Board of Commissioner provided input for her consideration on a variety of budget related items. For the Oregon Housing and Community Services budget, we specifically requested that she advance Policy Option Package 109, which addresses emergency housing assistance. Thus, we hope you will include \$50M for this POP into your final recommended version of HB 5512. As we suggested to the Governor, not only does this funding help people who are desperately in need of housing assistance, it also serves to develop a shared knowledge bank. Lane County continues to have real world experiences with making investments to reduce the numbers of un-sheltered people in our communities and our ability to share these experiences across the state is every bit as important as the investment itself.

We additionally want to emphasize the importance of investing in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). This is an evidence based practice, and Lane County is on the verge of building 80 beds under one roof of PSH in partnership with our housing service agency, Homes For Good. This model establishes a low bar for entry, and then focuses service delivery to the housing facility. It meets people where they are and we are committed to building additional capacity within Lane County in collaboration with OHCS. POP 103 would provide an additional \$50M investment for PSH and we will advocate for this funding stream to be fully evolved through a bonding request the agency is making via the Sub-Committee on Capital Construction later this session.

Lane County has a well formed structure for both governance and service delivery to address future policy issues and to shepherd the resources OCHS may be able to provide dependent on the decisions you will be making as part of your work on HB 5512. Our Homeless and Poverty Board has broad representation and expertise that helps guide decision making locally, while our Health and Human Services Department implements policy and develops projects. This body has been working tirelessly on issues related to homelessness, and most recently is working to implement recommendations developed by a consulting firm hired to make specific recommendations to our communities regarding strategies and investments we can make towards eliminating homelessness in Lane County. These include developing a permanent emergency shelter, expanding PSH options, hiring additional staff, and continuing to work with our cities to remain attentive to these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Farn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "N" and a long, sweeping tail.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY