

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

**Attention:** Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee.

**Submitted via email:** [jwmtr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:jwmtr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Dear Committee Members,

**We believe everyone deserves a place to call home.** This is the fundamental reason REACH Community Development exists and why we are writing in support of [SB 5512](#).

REACH is an Oregon non-profit that exists to create quality, affordable homes and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to thrive. We serve the Portland Metro region by building and preserving affordable apartment homes and through services and programs that give REACH residents the opportunity to succeed.

Oregon's communities will be more prosperous and successful if we are able to ensure that all people have access to quality, stable housing options. However, in the communities we serve, on average there are **only 20 affordable apartments for everyone 100 people who need it**. We have witnessed that state, local and federal policies and funding priorities have a bigger impact on the stable housing options available in our communities than an any individual or family's financial abilities. **The Oregon legislature has the opportunity to significantly improve the housing options throughout the state** through SB 5512 by setting priorities to include:

- **Preventing or ending homelessness** through investments in the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program, or investments in ending homelessness for children and families
- Supporting investments to **assist renters in the private market**
- Additional resources to support **developing new affordable rental homes**
- Additional resources to **maintain our existing community assets of affordable housing**

Over REACH's 37-year history, we have seen how public resources can improve housing stability for people and communities. The resources provided through SB 5512 will create new apartments and, more importantly, it will preserve precious community assets: existing permanently affordable housing. As an example, REACH recently secured tax credit funding to renovate the Rose Apartments, a single room occupancy (SRO) building for women who have been impacted by homelessness. The Rose is more than a building; it is a place to regain a sense of safety and hope. **The Rose Apartments provides much more than just a stable home. It has given the women that live here the opportunity to pursue and achieve their goals.** The building is nearly 100 years old with significant needs, including a seismic upgrade required to ensure the viability of the building in the event of an earthquake. Without public resources provided through SB 5512, community assets like this will eventually go away. The Rose apartments is just one example, but there are thousands of aging affordable apartments **throughout the state that we are at risk of losing over the coming decade.**

**The need for preservation funds, along with funds for new construction, should be a top priority for this session's budget.** REACH supports the work of OHCS and the importance of SB 5512 providing funding of:

- \$200 million to develop new affordable homes across Oregon (80% to affordable rental homes, 20% to affordable homes for purchase)
- \$100 million to preserve existing affordable rental housing

**If you believe like we do, that everyone should have a place to call home, put down roots in a community, and have the opportunity to thrive, then please vote YES on SB 5512.** Thank you for your service to Oregon and making the difficult tradeoffs needed to ensure housing stability is elevated as a top priority in our state. Because for a family facing a housing crisis, the next session is too late.

Sincerely,



Dan Valliere,  
REACH Community Development, CEO



Rebecca Maese, RN, Nurse Emeritus  
Board President  
Providence Health and Services (retired)