



March 27, 2019

Co-Chairs Senator James Manning Jr. & Representative David Gomberg; and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development:

As you know the League of Oregon Cities represents all 241 incorporated cities in the state. We focus on supporting and advocating for city success through a variety of work at the LOC. As part of that advocacy, we focus on the priorities that are set by the members and board of the LOC to find solutions and seek investments by the state. This year, an overwhelming number of cities have reached out to inform the LOC that addressing the issues of homelessness and housing are high priorities locally, and they want to work with the state to pursue this shared purpose.

Cities support the budget for Oregon Community Services and Housing in SB 5512 and the policy option packages that are included. Over the last two years, the LOC and OHCS have increased the level of partnership between the state and local governments. It is clear that the state and local governments need to work together to ensure that investments by the state and by local governments can stretch as far as possible to improve the development of affordable housing for low income Oregonians and to see better outcomes for addressing the complicated and variety of reasons for homelessness. We look forward to continuing to support the work and programs supported by OHCS.

In particular, we strongly support the additional position authority in POP 101 & POP 102. Local governments know that continuing to see success in meeting the needs of a community only comes with sufficient staffing that can focus on the long-term success of programs. Providing OHCS with these positions will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of OHCS programs.

One of the key issues for cities in finding solutions to both housing shortages and reducing homelessness is increasing the units and services that create permanent supportive housing. POP 103 is a huge step toward increasing the number of units available and, partnered with the investment in the Oregon Health Authority's budget for services, will go a long way in providing the needed services and safety for Oregonians that may otherwise not retain stable housing.

We also strongly support the new Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator proposed in HB 2055 and funded in POP 105. The projects that have been supported in the pilot project over the last year have shown that partnerships between the state, local government, and private industry can meet the needs for moderate income levels. These projects have brought opportunities to communities that often would not otherwise see this type of development.

Similarly, the robust investment in the Local Innovation and Fast Track Housing (LIFT) in POP 107 is vital for increasing the number of affordable units across the state. The preservation of existing affordable housing is another key component for having enough low-income affordable housing units, and POPs 110 & 111 are an important investments to prevent losing these assets.

Many of our communities are looking for ways to systemically address homelessness but are not direct providers of services or shelter. In fact, the LOC held a half day summit to highlight efforts being made across the state, which culminated in a roundtable discussion that can be viewed on the LOC website under the conference link (<http://www.orcities.org/Training/LOCConference/tabid/6833/language/en-US/Default.aspx>). POP 109 provides a significant investment in emergency housing and shelters that are a first step in addressing homelessness. Emergency shelter can help vulnerable populations in the short-term, but without enough funding these vital services cannot be found in every community in the state.

As cities and the state work from multiple angles to address the profound housing shortage and to assist the growing number of homeless Oregonians, investment in OHCS is vital to our shared success. We look forward to continuing to improve the coordination and partnership between the LOC and OHCS to see more successes moving into the future.

Sincerely,

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