



April 17, 2019

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Attention: Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Nathan Teske, and I am the Executive Director of Bienestar, a nonprofit affordable housing developer and owner in Washington County, with properties in Aloha, Hillsboro, Cornelius and Forest Grove. I am writing in support of HB 5030 for \$100 million to maintain affordable homes across Oregon.

My organization owns and operates 507 affordable rental homes, with a focus on the Latino and immigrant populations of our county, including many farm worker families. We provide a safe, stable and affordable home to over 2,000 low-income Oregonians, about half of whom are children. We provide programs and services to our residents, including emergency assistance, youth development, leadership development, and advocacy. There are almost 14,000 households living in Washington County that do not have access to affordable housing, and many are severely rent burdened. Affordable housing is needed so that families and children can have stable lives and put down roots in our community.

For that reason, I support HB 5030. Bienestar has experienced first-hand the importance of preserving affordable housing as we rehab the Montebello Apartments in Hillsboro, that will preserve affordable housing for the long-term for 49 low-income families. Bienestar has at least two more properties that will require additional funding and preservation in the next few years. One of them is Sunset Gardens, a 101-unit affordable apartment complex in Hillsboro that houses many working Latino families. The project was built in the 1960s and over time became a problem for the City of Hillsboro as a magnet for crime and delinquency. At the request of the City, Bienestar acquired the properties in 2008 and has operated them as affordable housing since, serving families that make less than 50% of area median income. However, due to the low-cost materials and poor design in the original, market-rate development, the project will need an infusion of new funding to sustain for the long term. Stable housing for these families means stability for their children, consistency in education, and a reliable home for workers. Stories like this are repeated across our state, and for this reason I support the Housing Alliance's request for \$100 million to maintain existing affordable housing.

This is a critical moment in our state's history, as we experience a housing crisis unlike any we've ever seen. I urge you to step up and commit vital resources to address this crisis. Thank you for time in reading this letter and for your dedication in serving our state as legislators – I know it's not easy.

Sincerely,

Nathan Teske

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