



HOUSING ALLIANCE

May 6, 2019

House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice Chair Findley, Vice Chair Marsh, members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for SB 262, which extends a local option property tax exemption related to multiple unit housing.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including non-profit housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People – our neighbors and members of our community – are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. During the last school year, over 21,750 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness at some point during the year.

Over the years, the Legislature has authorized several property tax exemptions for needed housing, including ORS 307.600-637. Local option property tax exemptions are one tool local jurisdictions can use to help incentivize and make financially viable affordable housing developments in their communities. SB 262 extends the sunset included in ORS 307.600-637 for ten years, which has been the standard extension for local option property tax exemptions, from July 1, 2022 to July 1, 2032.

Property tax exemptions for housing are critical for several reasons. Exemptions recognize the importance of housing to our communities. In particular this exemption, the multiple unit exemption, encourages the development of more dense housing options close to transit and city centers.

Communities including Portland and Eugene utilize this local option property tax exemption to help ensure affordable housing is a part of our communities. In Portland, this exemption is one of the key pieces of the inclusionary housing program, which provides affordable units within new housing developments. In Eugene, the program provides affordable units close to the downtown core.

Local option property tax exemptions, such as the one authorized in ORS 307.600-637, require the participation of multiple taxing districts, including the school district. Over the last several years, we have learned more about

the impacts of our housing challenges on schools. In the series “*Reading, Writing, Evicted*”¹, the Oregonian shed light on the significant turnover within classrooms every year due to housing challenges in our communities. This turnover creates stress and strain on teachers, classrooms, and our educational systems. In addition, from the Oregon Department of Education McKinney Vento data², we learn that students experiencing homelessness are significantly less likely to meet or exceed standards in English language, math, and science, and that students experiencing homelessness attend school less frequently due to high turnover. Increasing the availability of regulated affordable housing can help provide families with the stability they need to keep kids in school, and on track to graduate.

We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits, and allows people to build for their futures. Kids are able to focus on the things that matter – being kids, doing their homework – instead of worrying about where their families will sleep at night. Parents are able to focus on work, on family, and on community. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

We urge you to support SB 262.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

¹ https://www.oregonlive.com/education/page/reading_writing_evicted.html, Oregonian, February 2018

² <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/ESEA/McKinney-Vento/Documents/State%20Summary%20Data%2017-18%20for%20web.pdf>, Oregon Department of Education, November 2018

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
Chrisman Development
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Creswell
City of Eugene
City of Forest Grove
City of Hillsboro
City of Hood River
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
Common Ground OR-WA
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enhabit
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
Impact Northwest
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN

Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing, Inc
Metro
Mid Columbia Housing Authority
Native American Youth and Family Center
(NAYA)
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
(NEDCO)
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Center for Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Authorities
Oregon Law Center
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Portland Housing Center
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Rogue Action Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Transition Projects
Turning Point
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services