



HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 11, 2020

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

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice-Chair Marsh, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HJR 203. HJR 203 will refer to voters a constitutional amendment that will allow the Oregon State Legislature to impose a real estate transfer fee on high value homes for the purposes of funding affordable 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.

All Oregonians deserve 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.

Today, we have qualified and experienced affordable housing developers who are working across Oregon to build more safe, stable, and affordable homes for Oregonians with low incomes. We have qualified and experienced providers who are supporting people with extremely low incomes with long term rent assistance through federal programs. Across Oregon, we have talented and experienced organizations and local jurisdictions doing their part to ensure more of their residents have access to the safety and stability of a home. The state has invested unprecedented levels of resource and we cannot meet the needs today or for the foreseeable future. We know how to solve the problem, and we must do more.

We need additional resources to expand on this good work and to meet the needs in our communities. Across our state, rents have outpaced wages. People who are living on fixed incomes and people earning minimum wage are being priced out of our housing markets, and this has negative impacts on our entire community – on our schools, our health systems, and our employers.

As a state, we must do more to support the development of safe, stable and affordable homes across Oregon. A real estate transfer fee is a strategy used by many other states, including Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Nevada, New Jersey, South Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia.

Since 2012, Oregon has been prohibited from even allowing the Legislature to consider this as a mechanism to fund affordable housing. We believe the Legislature should have the authority to consider this type of mechanism, particularly given the scope and scale of the need currently impacting our communities.

Real estate transfer fees are a smart and sensible way to fund affordable housing, and HJR 203 places reasonable sideboards on potential measures, including limiting the fee to only the value of the house above \$500,000.

We urge your support of HJR 203.

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

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
Business for a Better Portland
CASA of Oregon
Chrisman Development
Central City Concern
Children First for Oregon
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Hillsboro
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
College Housing Northwest
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enhabit
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authorities of Oregon
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 Oregon Cities
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Rogue Action Center
Rose CDC
St. Francis Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition