

March 9, 2021

# MMC

## Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium

**Mayor Lacey Beaty**

City of Beaverton

**Mayor Brian Hodson**

City of Canby

**Mayor Jeffrey Dalin**

City of Cornelius

**Mayor Gery Schirado**

City of Durham

**Mayor Brian Cooper**

City of Fairview

**Mayor Peter Truax**

City of Forest Grove

**Mayor Travis Stovall**

City of Gresham

**Mayor Tom Ellis**

City of Happy Valley

**Mayor Steve Callaway**

City of Hillsboro

**Mayor Ken Gibson**

City of King City

**Mayor Joe Buck**

City of Lake Oswego

**Mayor Mark Hardie**

City of Maywood Park

**Mayor Mark Gamba**

City of Milwaukie

**Mayor Teri Lenahan**

City of North Plains

**Mayor Ted Wheeler**

City of Portland

**Mayor Walt Williams**

City of Rivergrove

**Mayor Keith Mays**

City of Sherwood

**Mayor Jason Snider**

City of Tigard

**Mayor Randy Lauer**

City of Troutdale

**Mayor Frank Bubenik**

City of Tualatin

**Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle**

City of Vancouver (ex officio)

**Mayor Jules Walters**

City of West Linn

**Mayor Julie Fitzgerald**

City of Wilsonville

**Mayor Scott Harden**

City of Wood Village

Representative Janelle Bynum, Chair  
Representative Ron Noble, Vice-Chair  
Representative Karin Power, Vice-Chair  
House Judiciary Committee

Re: Support for HB 3115

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Power, and Members of the Committee,

The Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium represents the mayors of twenty-four cities in the Portland Metro Area, collectively home to over 1.7 million Oregonians. The MMC writes to express its support for HB 3115.

Housing insecurity is a chronic issue in many MMC cities due to the high cost of housing in the metro region. Homelessness was a mounting problem for MMC cities before COVID-19, and the economic downturn produced by the pandemic has further increased the number of households vulnerable to homelessness. MMC cities are increasingly seeing homelessness that represents a variety of populations, including families and youth. The economic hardships of COVID-19 have also disproportionately affected the low-income Oregonians and communities of color who were already struggling to make ends meet.

The mayors of the MMC are united in their efforts to address the homelessness crisis in our cities and throughout Oregon. Decriminalizing homelessness has long been a top priority for the MMC, and we are concerned about the over-policing of our homeless residents. For these reasons, the MMC supports the steps taken by HB 3115 to align state policy with the *Martin v. Boise* ruling that government cannot criminalize certain conduct, such as lying, sitting, or sleeping on the streets, that is unavoidable as a result of homelessness.

HB 3115 provides a framework for cities to revisit their policies on survival activities and public space management to ensure that those policies reflect current case law. The MMC mayors agree that "objectively reasonable" is different from city to city, allowing our communities and leaders to craft ordinances that work best for our cities. As mayors, it is our responsibility to ensure our law enforcement officers are provided the appropriate guidance to humanely and compassionately assist our homeless population who has nowhere else to go but the streets. HB 3115 helps with that.

The MMC looks forward to continuing to work together with the Oregon Legislature to address our state's homelessness crisis. Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

The Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium