March 24, 2021

RE: Support for HB 3275

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer, and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. I am writing to share our organization's support for HB 3275. This bill will benefit low and moderate-income buyers of permanently affordable homes by creating a fair and uniform tax structure across Oregon counties.

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon advocated strongly for homeownership to be an eligible use of LIFT funds. Over the past three years, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) has provide LIFT awards to help fund the construction of 82 Habitat for Humanity homes in six Oregon counties. Currently, only two of these counties routinely provide a special tax assessment for permanently affordable homes.

HB 3275 provides long-term property tax relief for the owners of permanently affordable homes, by reflecting their ownership stake in the home itself and not the land. This practice is already observed by Oregon's largest counties: Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington. HB 3275 expands this benefit to owners of permanently affordable homes throughout the state in a uniform, fair and consistent way.

With home prices in Oregon averaging over half a million dollars, the task of maintaining affordable homeownership options has become increasingly challenging. In many communities, organizations like ours partner with families to build and sell affordable homes using the community land trust/shared-equity model. This community investment benefits the homebuyer by providing stability and equity building opportunities at an affordable price. These homes benefit future buyers and the community through permanent affordability.

HB 3275 is a step forward in ensuring permanent affordable homeownership opportunities for Oregonians across the state. We urge your support. Thank you for your time and service.

With heartfelt thanks,

Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director