



**Letter of Support for House Bill 5011
Ways and Means Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee**

March 29, 2021

Co-Chairs Beyer and Gomberg, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bayo Ware. I am the Manufactured Home Placement and Replacement Manager at Community and Shelter Assistance of Oregon (CASA). Thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 5011.

CASA's mission is deeply rooted in service to farmworkers and other low-income populations throughout Oregon, especially in rural areas. As a community development nonprofit, we develop affordable housing and neighborhood facilities, and financial well-being programs. As the state's only ROC USA Certified Technical Assistance Provider (CTAP), we help residents to purchase and operate manufactured home parks as resident-owned communities (ROC), one of the nation's only naturally occurring affordable housing models.

Historically, staff traveled monthly to communities across the state to attend resident board meetings, resulting in them spending nearly as much time in their cars as in the actual meetings. In light of COVID-19, boards scrambled to hold these meetings virtually. While this relieved much of the travel burden, it exacerbated the need for broadband access in rural Oregon, where most ROCs are located. Additionally, increased access, in turn, will increase CASA's capacity to serve more communities, by freeing up time traditionally used for travel.

Please consider passing HB 5011, which proposes a \$6.4 million broadband investment in affordable housing communities. Oregon Housing & Community Services' (OHCS) innovative programs have been nationally recognized. These funds would ensure that it continues to blaze trails for other state housing authorities to follow. We are dedicated to helping close technology gaps in ROCs. Having already secured a NeighborWorks America grant to better understand the broadband needs of ROCs, we are interested in working with OHCS to expand this much needed service to all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bayo Ware