



We build strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter.

March 29, 2021

Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

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

I write to you today on behalf of Sisters Habitat for Humanity in **support of HB 5011**, and the recommended budget for the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) Department for the 2021-2023 biennium.

Sisters Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, community and hope. Our vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live. We build homes in the Sisters community in partnership with families earning 60% of Area Median Income and below. We are the only builder in town who can provide homeownership opportunity to families at this income level. Habitat homebuyers purchase homes at a price they can afford and with a zero-interest mortgage so they start earning equity right away. For many families, this is the first time they are able to build an asset.

Not only are the homes a blessing for the families but also for our community. Families who have decent affordable housing can stop living paycheck to paycheck; kids do better in school; parents can begin building a future and become more engaged citizens; and businesses have stable employees that are not forced to move due to lack of housing.

As you know, the State of Oregon has been hit hard by a number of crises in 2020. The ongoing pandemic and summer wildfires have devastated communities across the state and thrown families into economic distress. Prior to 2020, Oregon was already experiencing a housing crisis, and too many of our neighbors and community members were experiencing housing instability. In times of crisis like the ones that we experienced last year, and the one we are continuing to experience, a strong response to aid those who are most impacted is critical.

Throughout the years, Habitat for Humanity has worked with OHCS to implement and administer various programs including pre-development loans, down-payment assistance and LIFT for homeownership. These programs have helped us serve more families in our community, 71 to date! This is a big impact in town the size of Sisters.

We strongly support the passage of HB 5011 so that organizations like ours can continue to partner with OHCS and work to serve the people of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the State of Oregon.

Best Regards,

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

Sharlene Weed
Executive Director