

February 2, 2022

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 Jaimie Fender
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 Rachel Lyles Smith
City of Oregon City

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 McEnery-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

Senator Jama, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Support for SB 1557

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

The Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium (MMC) represents the mayors of 25 cities in the Portland Metro Area, collectively home to over 1.7 million Oregonians. The MMC writes to express support for SB 1557 and sees this as an important step in protecting Oregonians from homelessness.

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 and housing inflation 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 shortage of affordable housing in the Portland region and across our state is compounded by the fact that numerous affordable housing contracts are on the verge of expiring. When an affordable housing contract ends and the property owner chooses to move those units to market rate, it can be devastating to low-income tenants who cannot afford the increased rent. Waiting lists for affordable housing units are often years long, so pricing these residents out of the affordable housing they currently have risks leaving families homeless with few options.

Senate Bill 1557 would create a pilot program for rental assistance subsidies to landlords of tenants in low-income households to keep them housed after the property owners withdraw from publicly supported housing. It is more effective and more humane to keep people housed before they are forced to live on the street, and Senate Bill 1557 provides another potential tool to do just that.

The mayors of the MMC urge the committee's support for Senate Bill 1557 and appreciate the efforts made by the Oregon Legislature keeping Oregonians housed. Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

The Mayors of the MMC