



February 8, 2022

House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Campos and Morgan and Committee members,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce and our 1,200 business members in Central Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of HB 4123: Requiring Oregon Department of Administrative Services to provide grants for certain coordinated homeless response systems.

The Bend Chamber has taken an active role in supporting policies to address the region's workforce housing challenges and more broadly housing challenges along the entire continuum, including those who are houseless. We understand the issues surrounding houselessness are complex and layered, and believe more data is needed to best understand the specific challenges facing this segment of our population.

Housing provides not only shelter from the elements, but moreover it provides safety and stability to people's lives and the community. The Bend Chamber supports coordinated policy solutions, such as the pilot program outlined in HB 4123. Ensuring access to services, reducing barriers to employment, such as childcare, and increasing self-sufficiency via career track training programs are all solutions that can be explored within this new grant program.

The strategies outlined in HB 4123 provide a structured and coordinated approach to the complex issue, and we thank Representative Jason Kropf for bringing forward this important bill. We believe it will allow for local solutions to an issue of statewide concern, and moreover increased information sharing to best inform decision making.

Ultimately we believe housing is a fundamental right, and although the issue of houselessness is challenging and multifaceted, together we can take steps toward achieving that goal. We urge a yes vote on the bill and -3 amendment to include other cities within Deschutes County in the pilot program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Katy Brooks
President & CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.