

February 2, 2023

RE: House Bill 2548
2023 Regular Session
Oregon Legislature

Oregon House Committee on Revenue, Representative Nancy Nathanson, Chair

Chair Nathanson and Committee Members -

I am writing to urge your opposition to HB 2548. Section 3 of this bill would diminish local control by revoking the Metro Regional Government's income tax authority, and – more importantly - the right of voters to have a say in issues of local concern. **I urge you to oppose this bill.**

The negative impact Section 3 of HB 2548 would be extremely detrimental for the Metro Portland region in two ways:

- First, it would halt significant progress underway from the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) measure that is providing funding to address homelessness at a scale that matches the scope of our region's crisis. The measure created a 1% marginal tax on high-income earners and a 1% tax on net income from businesses within Metro's jurisdiction who have over \$5 million in gross receipts from both within and outside the Metro jurisdiction. **Voters of the Metro jurisdiction overwhelmingly supported this measure by a 16% margin.** Since its passage, SHS has provided funding for over 2,000 people to move from homelessness to permanent housing, 9,368 people to avoid eviction and therefore prevented from becoming homeless in the first place, and created almost 1,000 shelter beds across the Metro Region. SHS included a 10-year sunset to give voters more control and authority to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. HB 2548 would take away this control, authority and choice of voters to continue funding services for the most vulnerable in their community.
- **Second**, HB 2548 – Section 3 specifically - would remove Metro's ability to impose an income tax within its jurisdiction and **deny** the authority voters currently have to weigh in on how their tax dollars are used for any issue, be it homeless services or transportation. Such a repeal is regressive and limiting.

The investments from SHS are making a difference in the lives of thousands of people currently living on our streets—and the work is just getting started. These funds are critical to placing thousands more people into housing, and providing the rent assistance and support services to help them stay housed long term.

I strongly urge the members of this committee to oppose HB 2548.

Sincerely,

Laura Golino de Lovato
Portland, OR