



Testimony on behalf of the City of Eugene on HB 2001/5019 2/22/23

Good morning Chair Dexter, Vice Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Members of the Committee, I am Lucy Vinis, Mayor of Eugene. Thank you for your leadership in bringing forward an ambitious housing and homeless agenda. As a Mayor working on these issues, I recognize how challenging it is not only to move these critical items forward, but to also ensure that the laws are understood and broadly supported.

I am here in my official capacity as Mayor to speak on behalf of the City of Eugene related to House Bill 2001 and the funding bill HB 5019. I want to focus on three points that are critical for cities.

First, as you have been hearing from cities during the discussion of the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis bill, careful attention to a broad array of technical details in this legislation is essential to ensure that cities will be able to efficiently and cost effectively implement the changes. When bills are not clearly written, litigation becomes the pathway for determining clarity, which costs cities money, delays projects, and does not result in more housing units. With this in mind, Eugene requests that this committee enter into the record a commitment to work with cities to pass a technical fix bill to address the implementation of OHNA. Without this legislative clarity, I can assure you- from personal experience implementing a previous HB 2001 at the local level- that the intended outcomes of the bill will not be realized until far into the future.

Second, the legislature must shift perspective from directing the work of local government, to engaging us in a cooperative process that values shared governance. Early on during this session, cities were assured by legislators that there would be time to methodically work through OHNA, and yet it is being packed into an emergency homeless response bill. Our

staff are beyond capacity and have been for quite some time. Each year the Legislature or Governor are adding more onto our plate, many times without adequate resources to support these new mandates. While we acknowledge we all have a part to play in addressing the housing and homelessness crisis, simply throwing responsibilities onto cities without understanding the issues we are dealing with is reckless and does not build partnership in governance. We all want the same for our communities. Let's start working together in a manner that supports and strengthens our shared goals.

Third and finally, I ask the Legislature to clearly articulate within HB 5019 how emergency homeless funds will flow to cities to support our on-going efforts to provide temporary emergency shelters. As state general funds are appropriated to implement Governor Kotek's Executive Order, the legislature must provide clear guidance to cities and counties on the targets or metrics for success and how to access resources to support our existing efforts.

Thank you for your time, your service to our state, and your courage to ensure housing reform works for all of our state.