



2/16/2024

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Representative Paul Holvey, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Capital Construction
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Affordable housing preservation in HB 5201

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and Members of the Subcommittee:

Community Alliance of Tenants calls on you to allocate lottery-backed bond revenue to preserve Oregon's existing affordable housing. Formed in 1996, the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) is Oregon's only statewide, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant-rights organization. CAT educates, organizes and develops the leadership of low-income tenants. It is the mission of CAT to educate and empower tenants to demand safe, stable and affordable rental homes.

Nearly 5,000 units of regulated affordable housing will lose their affordability restrictions in the next 5 years alone, placing nearly 5,000 low-income households across the state at risk of being priced out and losing their homes.

We often hear from tenants in this situation at the moment of crisis when all of their options are exhausted and they must move because when the rent restrictions expire the current tenants can no longer afford to live there. In many cases, there are no equally affordable alternatives to rent and households double up or become homeless. We know what is coming so we urge you to invest in preservation now.

Urgently, 1,400 units of affordable housing at 24 properties are waiting for preservation funding after their applications to OHCS were unsuccessful in 2022, and affordability restrictions will expire for 923 homes between now and the end of 2025.

Housing preservation resources are also used to protect the residents of manufactured housing parks. An average of 32 parks are put up for sale every year, threatening the housing of nearly 1,800 low-income households annually. During the 2021-23 biennium, 69 manufactured housing parks with a total of 3,665 homes were put up for sale. Due to scarce funding, only seven of those parks were preserved as affordable housing.

In all, OHCS estimates the cost of preserving existing affordable housing at \$200 million per biennium, yet in 2023 the Legislature allocated only \$50 million. While far short of the need, **an investment of \$30 million in 2024 will support the long-term preservation of some 400 affordable homes** – which means protecting the long-term stability and well-being of 400 low-income households.

At an average cost of \$72,000 per unit, preservation is a cost-effective and morally urgent investment that prevents the displacement of low-income Oregonians – while also securing affordable homes for future residents. Please take advantage of this opportunity to make significant progress in addressing this crisis with a \$30 million investment in 2024.

Sincerely,



Kim McCarty, Executive Director
Community Alliance of Tenants