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February 2, 2025

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means  
Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Mary Kyle McCurdy, Associate Director

Re: SB 5528, Department of Land Conservation & Development

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 5528, the Governor's recommended budget (GRB) for the Department of Land Conservation & Development (DLCD). We support SB 5528, including the Policy Option Packages (POP).

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. DLCD is a small agency with a big mission that they do well, with very competent staff and leadership. And, they are leaders among state agencies in using broad, inclusive public engagement, which leads to better implementation and outcomes.

The legislature has recognized the key role that the land use planning program and DLCD play in meeting the state's housing needs, by funding the department in recent years to formulate and implement the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) program. OHNA is focused on the actual production of housing to meet the needs of all Oregonians, at every income level, in every town and city across the state. This funding has enabled DLCD to convene Oregonians around housing solutions, and to provide technical assistance, policy development, model ordinances, grants, and more to local governments - so they can update their land use and public facilities plans to meet the housing needs of today and tomorrow. We are at the beginning of the OHNA program and starting to see it produce results. Continuing the assistance to local governments is essential to actually realizing housing production. POPs 501, 503, 504, and 505 do this.

The legislature also directed creating the Housing Accountability and Production Office (HAPO) between DLCD and the Building Codes Division, which is charged with "support[ing] local governments and developers in understanding and implementing state housing law to facilitate faster, more affordable production." The HAPO office, which is just getting off the ground now, holds much promise for facilitating housing production by working directly with developers and local governments to trouble shoot issues arising in individual project applications, and by working to streamline local government development processes. We strongly support continuing funding for the HAPO office, in POP 501.

Finally, we need data to know if what we are doing is working, to see where and why it is working, and to catch places where we are not seeing housing produced and to highlight why. POPs 500 and 506 address the need to collect and track data on zoning, infrastructure, and housing production, and to fund cities to partner in this effort

The GRB calls for funding DLCDC programs at their current service level, and to continue and expand a few new programs in Oregon's top priority areas, including housing and homelessness, with eight policy option packages, most aimed at supporting local government land-use planning efforts to meet OHNA's housing production targets. We urge you to support the DLCDC budget in SB 5528.