



DEVELOPING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

February 12, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for HB 2698

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice Chair Andersen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Saxe and I work at DevNW, an affordable housing development and asset-building agency serving Lane, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Marion, Polk and Clackamas Counties. We embark on comprehensive community development throughout our seven-county service area through services aimed at increasing financial stability for individuals and families as well as through economic and housing development.

We are one of a network of Regional Housing Centers across the state that provide financial, rental and pre-purchase education and counseling to support low- and moderate-income families in becoming first-time homebuyers. Our pre-purchase services demystify the homebuying process, helping clients connect with local lenders and real estate agents, plan for those unexpected homeownership expenses and avoid predatory lending practices. One-on-one counseling sessions ensure that our clients are ready to take the step to homeownership, that their financial and credit picture make them mortgage-ready and that they've assembled a team of professionals they can trust.

Homeownership is the single greatest way Americans build wealth, creating generational impact for families, stabilizing kids in school and ensuring a reliable workforce. Oregon has one of the lowest homeownership rates, hovering around 64%, ranking Oregon 43rd in the nation. We believe that setting a statewide homeownership goal is a concrete step to align state resources and policy behind shared goals of increasing homeownership and housing stability for families across Oregon.

Thank you for your work to help Oregonians achieve their dream of homeownership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KSaxe".

Karen Saxe
Director of Policy, Advocacy and Strategic Relationships

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