

February 25, 2025

Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Breese-Iverson

House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

900 Court Se. NE Salem, OR 97301



The League of Oregon Cities (LOC), as well as representatives of our member cities, had the pleasure of serving as part of the Sustainable Shelter Working Group this past fall. We appreciate the dedication and effort on the part of our fellow workgroup members, Representative Marsh, and Governor Kotek to create a more sustainable, complete shelter system.

HB 3644 represents a collaborative and comprehensive approach for state, city, and county governments in partnership with service providers. It clarifies roles, creates a framework of consistency, and equity across the state. In addition, we are particularly appreciative of the Shelter Workgroup's recommendation for the Safe Temporary Emergency Placement sites, or STEP program that is included within HB 3644, will allow hundreds of shelter beds statewide to be eligible for state funding. This is key to many of our members who have stood up alternative model shelters, with successful outcomes, but they have been unable to access state resources to help fund those vital shelter beds. The STEP program will ensure these vital shelter beds are able to access state shelter funds.

Included in this bill is \$217M to fund this newly created shelter framework. The LOC fully supports the full funding of our shelter system and \$217M needs to be considered the floor for shelter funding and not the ceiling. Homelessness continues to be the greatest crisis facing our state today and our investments as a state must reflect that. This figure only accounts for shelter beds that have historically received state funding, and does not account for the new STEP program or the universe of shelter beds that are currently funded through other sources.

Cities are thankful for Governor Kotek's inclusion of shelter funds within her budget and recognize the Legislature's role in creating a balanced budget based on multiple factors. Increased investment to a level that will also support newly eligible STEP shelters and the ability to expand the current shelter beds statewide to address the growing gap of needed beds and available beds is vital.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alexandra Ring, League of Oregon Cities, Lobbyist Housing and Land Use