

Submitter: Hilary Nichols

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2995

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, and esteemed members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

My name is Hilary Nichols, I work and live in Portland, and I write to express my strong support for House Bill 2995, which seeks to establish a Task Force on Reparations for African-American Oregonians. I urge this legislative body to recognize the critical need for this initiative and to pass this bill without delay.

HB 2995 is an important step toward addressing the long-standing, systemic racial injustices that have harmed Black Oregonians for generations. This task force will provide a comprehensive study of historical and ongoing discrimination and develop actionable recommendations for reparative justice.

Oregon has a documented history of racial exclusion, economic disenfranchisement, and systemic discrimination against African Americans. From exclusion laws and redlining to disparities in employment, education, and healthcare, Black Oregonians have faced barriers that have prevented full participation in the social and economic fabric of our state. By passing HB 2995, Oregon acknowledges these harms and takes meaningful action to:

- Examine the economic and social impacts of systemic racism on Black Oregonians.
- Propose financial and non-financial reparations to address past injustices.
- Educate the public on Oregon's racial history and the need for reparations.
- Recommend policies that promote equity, justice, and economic empowerment for African-American communities.

Passing HB 2995 is not just about studying past harms; it is about charting a path forward toward justice and healing. I'm inspired by the work of the Albina Vision Trust, which is the largest restorative redevelopment effort in America. Over the past three years, Albina Vision Trust (AVT) has achieved several major community-driven milestones. In 2021, AVT secured key rights to acquire a 10.5-acre Portland Public Schools (PPS) site, and by 2023, broke ground on Albina One, a 94-unit affordable housing development. In early 2024, AVT successfully negotiated a binding resolution from PPS to relocate its headquarters, paving the way for AVT's acquisition of the site by mid-2025. Additionally, AVT secured \$25 million in state funding for site preparation and an unprecedented \$488 million in federal investment to construct a highway cover over I-5 and revitalize the district. In March 2024, the

Oregon Transportation Commission approved a work plan to explore AVT's stewardship of governance and air rights over the future highway cover, marking a major step toward the restoration of Albina. I believe that HB 2995 will create even more opportunities to do amazing, restorative work like AVT has accomplished.

By supporting this bill, Oregon has the opportunity to be a national leader in addressing racial injustices and ensuring a more equitable future for all. I urge the members of this committee to support HB 2995 and stand on the right side of history.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony, and for your service to foster a healthier, more equitable Oregon.