



March 4, 2025

BY OLIS PORTAL

The House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

RE: HLA Testimony in Support of HB 3589

Dear Members of the House Committee On Housing and Homelessness:

Housing Land Advocates (HLA) is a nonprofit organization that advocates for land use policies and practices that ensure an adequate and appropriate supply of affordable housing for all Oregonians. HLA strongly supports HB 3589, a bill to require the Housing and Community Services Department to develop a senior housing development initiative that would be funded through a transfer of funds from the Senior Property Tax Deferral Revolving Account from the present through July 1, 2031

HLA strongly supports HB 3589 as it seeks to address a critical and important housing need of low income, older Oregon residents. While approximately 18.6% of Oregon's population is 65 years old and older, slightly more than 17% of older Oregonians have incomes at or below the Federal Poverty Threshold. More importantly, of the 21% of older Oregonians who rent, this group is twice as likely to be burdened by high housing costs with 60% paying more than 30% of their income housing costs. For this population, high housing costs negatively impact their ability to pay for other important needs including food, transportation and access to adequate health care.

HB 3589 would place this program within the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services which is well suited to oversee the program. Additionally, HB 3589 specifies that affordable housing projects receiving funds from this program would remain eligible for housing tax credits to ensure these dollars are leveraged with other program dollars, making efficient use of the funds.

For maximum use of these scarce funds, HLA recommends HB 3589 direct OHCS to include in their scoring criteria points for projects with a minimum number of units to make certain these dollars create the maximum number of units. In addition, HB 3589 should include language to require these units meet accessibility standards or be adaptable to meet the needs of this population.

Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 3589 which seeks to address a critical need of low-income older Oregonians.

Sincerely

Jennifer Bragar
Board President

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cc: (by email)
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