



March 12, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in support of SB 50 with -1 amendment

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

College Housing Northwest is a non-profit organization that enhances student success by creating supportive housing communities, providing programs and services, and reducing the financial burden for students. Created in 1971, by students and for students, College Housing Northwest has grown to include six properties and serve over 1,000 students.

In 2022, recognizing that access to reliable, affordable housing is the single largest barrier to college success, we established Affordable Rents for College Students (ARCS). ARCS works across colleges, universities and service providers to provide homeless or housing-insecure students with stable, affordable housing in order to help them succeed in achieving their degree.

More information about ARCS and the recently released HOPE Center Basic Needs Survey of university and community college campuses, which found that nearly 60% of students experience at least one form of basic needs insecurity and 14% of students experience homelessness. At ARCS and College Housing Northwest, we are deeply committed to housing these students.

Central to our success is expanding our portfolio of properties. SB 50, with the -1 amendments, creates an essential option for non-profits like CHNW and ARCS. Acquisition of market rate housing for conversion to affordable student housing is likely the only strategy to expand our low-cost student housing inventory. It is a proven strategy that brings new units on quickly and at rates that students can afford, often 20% AMI or less. Our newest property, a hotel-conversion that opened this fall, includes 50 free units, allowing students to build a foundation, receive financial advice and planning, and ease into a traditional rent structure.

CHNW is currently in negotiations to acquire an additional 100-unit property. Were funding such as is contemplated in SB 50 available and secured, it would mean offering all 100 units at deeply affordable rates. Without it, 50 or fewer units would be designated deeply affordable.

Please support SB 50, it will make a difference in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Neely", written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Neely, Government Relations, CHNW