



25 March 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

RE: Senate Bill 51

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I am the Executive Director of the **Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency** in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk, and nine other counties across Oregon. Annually, we provide more than \$80 million in services and direct client assistance for housing, homelessness, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs to more than 60,000 Oregonians in poverty. I also serve as the Vice President for Legislative Affairs at the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, sit on the Housing Committee of the Racial Justice Council, and previously was a member of the House Bill 2100 Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities, and recently Chaired the Legislature's Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 51 and the meaningful steps it takes to address one of Oregon's most urgent housing challenges: the preservation of existing affordable housing, including manufactured home parks, which often represent the last rung of naturally affordable housing for many families. Preservation is not only more cost-effective than new construction, it is a critical strategy for protecting renters, maintaining community stability, and achieving Oregon's housing equity goals.

With the proposed amendments to Senate Bill 51 establishing a forward-looking Affordable Housing Preservation Program, Oregon would be taking important steps towards identifying and responding to the risks that affordable housing projects face – through a coordinated, data-informed and community-centered preservation strategy.

Particularly encouraging is the inclusion of direct support for residents at risk of losing their homes. The prioritization of culturally responsive property management services and the investment in capacity-building and training for affordable housing project property management operations and practices including non-profits and Tribal Nations.

For all these reasons, I urge you to support and advance Senate Bill 51. We must act now to protect the homes we already have – and the residents whose lives and stability depend on them. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Jones
Executive Director