



We build strength, stability, self-reliance *and* shelter.

March 26, 2025

To: Joint Ways and Means Committee on Transportation and Economic Development

RE: Support for HB 5011

Dear Chair Gomberg, Chair Woods and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. On behalf of our organization and the 23 local Habitat for Humanity affiliates we serve, we urge your strong support for House Bill 5011, especially those components designed to increase affordable homeownership supply, access and stability.

For a majority of households in the United States, homeownership is affordable housing. If you were fortunate enough to purchase a typical Oregon home 20 years ago (in 2005), your monthly mortgage payment is less than half of the market-rate rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in the same community.

Homeownership is key to building household stability, generational wealth, and strong communities, yet it remains out of reach for far too many Oregon households.

We are confronting the following shared challenges:

- *For every dollar Oregonians earned in wage increases between 2013 and 2022, the median sales price of a home increased by \$7.10.*
- This crisis disproportionately impacts communities of color, with a 15% homeownership gap between white households and households who identify as black, indigenous, Hispanic/Latinx and other people of color.
- Our state ranks 43rd in the nation for homeownership rates.

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon has the honor of supporting the Unlocking Homeownership Coalition, a group of organizations, associations and municipalities fighting for everyday Oregonians who are struggling to make the dream of owning a home a reality.

We're pushing for smart, people-focused investments and policies in 2025 that will make a meaningful difference in addressing our state's housing crisis. We thank Governor Kotek for prioritizing general fund investments targeted to increase access to homeownership in her recommended budget. These tried-and-true homeownership programs will:

- Ramp up the production of entry-level homes statewide; and
- Increase access to homeownership, especially for first-time and first-generation homebuyers.

The following investments will increase entry-level homeownership supply:

- **POP 518: This \$16.9 million investment in the Homeownership Development Incubator Program** will expedite entry-level homeownership production by covering pre-development costs, including plans and permits; support construction of homes affordable to middle income households, earning 80-120% AMI; stimulate entry-level homeownership production in rural Oregon; and expand culturally responsive homeownership opportunities, including on sovereign tribal lands.
- **\$100 million in Article XI-Q Bond proceeds will support LIFT Homeownership**, expanding permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for Oregon households who earn up to 80% of the area median income (AMI). This program stimulates the rapid development of multi-home sites, with homes ready for sale within 36 months of receiving a funding reservation. Recent program improvements will ensure that this supply accelerator will function as intended to stimulate rural homeownership development, as well as denser urban developments.

These POPS included in HB 5011 expand access to first-time and first-generation homeownership:

- **POP 522: \$30 million in Down Payment Assistance for Culturally Responsive and Rural Organizations** will enable organizations to open the door to homeownership for an estimated 1,100 first-time and first-generation homebuyers. During prior budget cycles, the state of Oregon relied on document recording fees to fund most of our state's down payment assistance. Due to the high interest rate environment and record-low real estate transactions, document recording fee receipts are at an all-time low. These general fund resources will ensure current service levels for down payment assistance.
- **The Oregon IDA Initiative** is another critical entry point for would-be Oregon homebuyers. We urge you to ensure stable, ongoing funding for this impactful matched savings and education program, as proposed in HB 2735 (or HB 3809).

POPS 525 will ensure homeowner stability by providing \$2.5 million in funding for existing foreclosure prevention counseling providers.

We urge you to meaningfully advance homeownership supply, access and stability in the coming biennium through these targeted investments. **Together, we can open the doors to homeownership for thousands of Oregonians, close the racial wealth gap, and build a more equitable future for our state.**

Thank you for your leadership and support,



Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director