



MAYOR KEITH WILSON

March 27, 2025

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE, Hearing Room 174
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Portland, we respectfully request your support for House Bill 5011, which allocates critical funding to help provide individuals, families and communities with stable and affordable housing and important services to help people experiencing homelessness in Oregon.

Oregon continues to grapple with a housing and homelessness crisis that developed over many years and will take many years of sustained effort to address. While we understand how challenging it is to make budget decisions when resources are scarce, we encourage you to continue to prioritize housing and homelessness as a top priority as you make funding decisions for the state. The investments you make in the work of Oregon Housing & Community Services (OHCS) is fundamental to the wellbeing of our state for decades to come.

Like OHCS, the City of Portland is focused on expanding options for more affordable types of housing, keeping people housed, and improving access to effective shelter options that support pathways to health, employment, and housing for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Rapidly building out the homeless response system we need in Portland has increasingly become a central pillar of our work, with the City now operating nearly 1,000 shelter beds across the city. As our investments have grown, we have appreciated seeing the state legislature increasingly allocate resources toward homeless services. We strongly urge you to keep your foot on the gas. We strongly support the \$218 million proposed in the Governor's Recommended Budget to help sustain state-supported shelters. We ask that you consider that number the floor, not the ceiling, for this critical programming.

As you can see, the City of Portland is focused on ending unsheltered homelessness, which is the right thing to do for people who need a bed at night and to mitigate the crisis on our streets. There are many other important programs and investments outlined in HB 5011 that are essential to our shared efforts to provide Oregonians with access to stable and affordable housing and reduce the inflow into homelessness. For instance, long-term rental assistance, energy assistance, and other eviction prevention work plays a critical role in keeping individuals and families housed and to keep more people

from falling into homelessness. We desperately need these investments to bolster our efforts to move people from unsheltered homelessness, into shelter, and ultimately into various forms of housing. We would note that having access to enough rental assistance continues to be a challenge as we have individuals ready to move out of our shelters and into housing.

In addition, OHCS does other important work to support the development of affordable housing, ensuring that there is a consistent supply of available regulated affordable units for people moving out of homelessness and for other families and individuals with the deepest need for access to stable housing. Other key OHCS investments support the rehabilitation and preservation of Oregon's existing inventory of affordable housing, which would otherwise be at risk of closure, and improve access to homeownership opportunities through downpayment assistance and other homeowner assistance programming. We have been, and continue to be, very supportive of the ongoing investment of Article XI-Q bond proceeds into the Local Innovation & Fast Track (LIFT) program to help finance the development of multi-family rental housing, new homes for home ownership, and permanent supportive housing. We continue to stand ready to partner with the state to get those dollars out the door quickly in the Portland metro region.

The 2025 legislative session is pivotal in our ongoing efforts to reduce unsheltered homelessness, keeping more people from falling into homelessness and helping to get the region back on track. Together with the county, we are housing and sheltering more people than ever before. We have and will continue to build momentum as long as resources are available to do this critical work. Unfortunately, as we prepare ourselves for reduced federal and local funding, our requests of the State legislature and state agencies will grow. Now more than ever, we encourage you to prioritize the programming of OHCS. Our communities truly depend on their success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "W".

Keith Wilson
Mayor