

3/28/2025

Senator Aaron Woods, Co-Chair
Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
900 Court Street NE, Salem OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg and Members of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development:

As a life-long resident of the Willamette Valley, I am writing to offer my strong support for HB 5011, which seeks to secure funding for affordable housing projects throughout Oregon. Specifically, I urge you to prioritize funding for Salem, which is facing an urgent affordable housing crisis.

As of recent reports, more than 50% of renters in Salem are cost burdened, meaning they are paying over 30% of their income for rent, and 25% are severely cost burdened, paying over 50%. This widespread burden on renters is unsustainable and disproportionately affects working families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. The lack of affordable housing is not only a financial hardship but also a barrier to economic mobility, stability, and the well-being of our community.

In 2015, Salem faced a shortage of 6,400 affordable housing units, and this gap has only widened as the population has continued to grow. Projections estimate that Salem's population will increase by 60,000 by 2035, with a growth rate 1.4% higher than the state average. Even more concerning, the number of low- to moderate-income households is expected to grow faster than other income groups. Without immediate intervention, the affordable housing shortage will become even more critical.

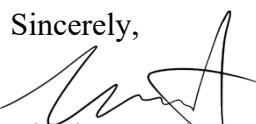
Salem's median household income (MHI) is currently 5% lower than the state's MHI, meaning that our residents have fewer financial resources to address this growing need for affordable housing. Furthermore, the Salem Housing Authority currently has 29,804 applicants on its waitlist, with 98.89% of these households having children. The average wait time for applicants is a staggering 1,813.69 days, or nearly 5 years. This prolonged wait is unacceptable, especially for families with young children who are in need of stable housing.

The current situation calls for bold action, and HB 5011 represents an important step in addressing this crisis. By securing funding for affordable housing projects, we can begin to reduce the housing burden on Salem's residents and create opportunities for families to thrive.

I urge you to support HB 5011 and prioritize the funding needed to address Salem's affordable housing shortage. Together, we can ensure that every Oregonian has access to a safe, affordable place to call home.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Charles Weathers

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