



April 16, 2025

Representatives Fred Girod and Rob Nosse  
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 5505

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of Home Forward in strong support of House Bill 5505. If adopted, this bill would provide critical bonding investments for the development of affordable housing in the 2025-27 biennium. These investments are essential to meet the housing needs of communities across the state.

Home Forward is the Public Housing Authority (PHA) for Multnomah County and the largest provider of affordable housing in the state of Oregon. We serve approximately 18,000 low-income households by providing affordable housing, administering rent assistance, and providing supportive services. We own over 7,200 homes throughout Multnomah County and fund rent assistance for thousands of households residing in private unregulated housing that we do not directly oversee. We administer emergency rent assistance programs that benefit landlords and tenants alike, including Short Term Rent Assistance, the Landlord Compensation Fund, and the Landlord Guarantee Fund.

I would like to highlight a few key investments in HB 5505. From General Obligation Bonds, HB 5505 directs approximately \$704 million dollars to the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Rental Housing and approximately \$80 million for Permanent Supportive Housing Program, both of which have been important funding sources for Home Forward.

In the 2023–2025 biennium, Home Forward used LIFT funding to support the development of 84 units of deeply affordable rental homes in the Cully neighborhood of NE Portland, one of Portland’s most culturally and ethnically diverse yet gentrifying neighborhoods. This new project will co-locate affordable housing with Portland Community College’s brand-new Workforce Development Center. In addition, the first floor of this project will include an early childhood education center for residents and the broader community that is designed and operated by the Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA). This new project will welcome families this summer. LIFT funding was crucial to actualizing this project that forges collaboration and partnerships to create a vibrant hub for families, students, and the larger community.

In addition, Home Forward used LIFT funds this last biennium to acquire a 47 unit like new market rate building in inner SE Portland to convert to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for formerly homeless individuals. Through this award, Home Forward was able to bring new affordable housing online 3-5 years faster and over 30% cheaper than new construction. This acquisition adds to Home Forward’s current 600 plus PSH portfolio. PSH is a proven model that combines deeply affordable housing with individualized supportive services resulting in reduced returns to homelessness, improved health outcomes, and lower public system costs. The success of Home Forward and other partners in providing housing stability to

chronically homelessness individuals through PSH demonstrates how powerful and scalable this solution is when properly resourced.

HB 5505 will allow Oregon to build on the success of proven programs and continue meeting the urgent needs of thousands of Oregonians who are struggling to find a safe, affordable place to live. Home Forward urges the subcommittee's support for HB 5505. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact Christina Dirks, Director of Policy and Planning at [christina.dirks@homeforward.org](mailto:christina.dirks@homeforward.org) (503) 348-1196 or regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Dirks', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christina Dirks  
Director of Policy and Planning  
Home Forward