



April 18, 2025

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for LIFT Homeownership investments in SB 5505

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse, and Members of the committee:

My name is Sarah Radcliffe. On behalf of Habitat for Humanity Portland Region, I urge your strong support for a \$100.9 M investment in LIFT for Homeownership.

Habitat Portland Region has dramatically scaled up our affordable homeownership production over the past five years thanks to consistent funding through LIFT. We have received eleven LIFT awards for 233 homes across the Portland Metro Region.

We are near completion on 35 energy-efficient, family-sized, permanently affordable homes in two LIFT funded projects in Hillsboro and King City. The average AMI of the buyers is 52%, with a family size of more than 4 people per household. That's 160 people who now have permanent stable housing thanks to LIFT for Homeownership.

And, we are currently raising walls on 60 more LIFT funded homes in Portland, Lake Oswego and Gresham. These are family-sized homes that meet Earth Advantage Platinum standards and will remain affordable for generations through our partnership with Proud Ground Community Land Trust.

Especially for households with lower incomes, homeownership is transformative – it's the difference between struggling to pay rent, impermissible choices between competing basic needs and frequent moves, *and the stability of a fixed 30-year affordable mortgage*. That's why Habitat Portland Region strives to sell two-thirds of our homes to families with incomes below 60% of the area median. As we have faced rising construction costs and interest rates, LIFT is what has allowed our program to continue to deliver these critical homeownership opportunities.

In the past, lawmakers may have worried that the network of affordable homeownership developers lacked the capacity to utilize \$100M or more in LIFT funds. Today, we have the opposite problem. The current round of LIFT funding for the latter half of the biennium includes \$40M, which may leave up to half of the projects with pending applications unfunded.

At Habitat Portland Region, we expect to have three projects in the queue for 2026. We have land secured for 87 homes, with an additional parcel for 40 homes under contract. Without additional funding, however, we will have to hit pause on shovel-ready and sorely needed developments.

I urge you to approve LIFT for Homeownership at the maximum possible level.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Radcliffe', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sarah Radcliffe
Director of Government Relations
Habitat for Humanity Portland Region